THE Young-Man's KINDNESS TO HIS GOD.

A *Sermon* Preached to *Young-men*, at their Desire, *Decemb.* 25. 1688. at Mr. *Oakes's* Meeting-Place, in *Hand-Alley*, by *Bishops-Gate-Street.*

By *Samuel Slater*, Minister of the *Gospel.*

My Son, give me thine Heart, and let thine Eyes observe my Waies, Prov. 23. 26.

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I

GOD

KINDNESS

AN EPISTLE TO THE Young Men.

Dearly Beloved.

I *Find it in my Heart to call you so. When that great God, in whose Hand our Times are, was pleased to give a fatal Blow to my Dear Brother, your Dear Pastor, upon the Lords Day, even while he was Labouring in his Lords Vineyard. Some of you in the Sorrowful Evening of that same Holy Day, Desired me to supply his Place upon the* Tuesday *following. The warning was short, my Spirits low, my Heart wounded, and my Strength*

much spent, in my publick Work; Yet I readily closed with the Motion, from a Principle of Love, both to my Master, and to you. That, what I delivered to you, met with acceptance, doth appear by your desire to have it made publick; and the desire of some of my Reverend Brethren before that: And in compliance with those desires, the Sermon is sent abroad, which otherwise had not thus seen the Light; for I am not ambitious of being in Print; nor do I set too high a value upon my Self and Labours. He that Plants is nothing, and he that Waters nothing. Pride I hate, where ever I see it, as most absurd and unreasonable; for tho we may have much to be thankful for, we have nothing to be proud of.

The acceptance this Discourse had with you and others, I know something of; but I would gladly know what Power it had upon you. You were pleased with the Words that sounded in your Ears; But did you feel the Vertue and Efficacy of the Truth upon your Hearts? Are you, that before had, made good? Are you that were good made better? Did you hear so as to Live, and like so as to Practice? Were you delivered up to that Form of Doctrine which was delivered un-

to you, as Mettle into a Mould, to be Form'd and Fashion'd by it? I brought with me some great Truths of God to you; But did you, at your going from the Congregation, carry any thing of God with you? Did you carry away more of his Grace, his Love, and Fear, than you brought? I must needs tell you, That the Labours of Ministers in the Gospel, are too good to be lost; not so much for the sake of our Labours, tho they stand us in more than you think, as for our Lord and Masters cost. And I beseech you, timely and seriously to consider, whether it will be profitable for you, to have not only our Labour lost upon you, but Gods cost too? Shall he send his Servants one after another, to Sow his Precious Seed upon you, and then have it rot in a barren Soil? Shall he wait to be gracious to a company of Wicked, Obstinate Wretches, who are resolved to continue Graceless? Shall he knock at your Doors a long time together, with greatest Importunity, and yet be excluded, when his and your Enemy meets presently with a most loving Reception, and all the Kindness and Entertainment you are capable of shewing? Shall his Holy and Blessed Spirit strive with you, and not prevail? Shall he of-

offer Love to you, and meet with nothing from you, but Slights and Contempts? Shall he draw you with the Cords of a Man, Rational Arguments, and Acts of Kindness; and you yet draw back, and go on, to draw Iniquity with Cords of Vanity, and Sin as with Cart Ropes. O Foolish People, and Unwise! Why do you, why will you thus requite the Lord your God? Why do you thus refuse and deny the Lord that bought you?

Verily, it grieves my Heart whensoever I think of it; that the great Majesty of Heaven and Earth, should thus be dishonoured and affronted; that the best Friend the World ever had, should meet with so few himself; and that those most free and gracious Offers which he makes in the Gospel, to the Children of Men, which are worthy of all Acceptation; and in which He doth, without all compare, out-bid all his Competitors, should be no more accepted and imbraced in the World. It is enough to fetch Tears from the Eyes, and Blood from the Heart, to consider, That the most Glorious God, is no more Honoured and Feared, than He is: That the most Lovely and Precious

vious Jesus, is no more Endear'd and Valued: And that Immortal, Inestimable Souls, are no more regarded: That an ugly Devil, who was not so Wise as to know when he was well, and to keep himself so: And that a base Lust, that never did Man a real Kindness, never afforded him any Pleasure, but what he must pay more for, than it is worth: And a Fading World, that withers in the Hand of him that hath it, and perisheth in the using; and in the performance is not the tenth part of what it was in promising. That, I say, these should have so many Votaries, and the Eternal JEHOVAH *so few, though he is Infinite in all Perfections. Oh! that the World, which was once Deluge'd, and now is so foul again, may be wash'd in its own Tears; upon this account, and that on this egregious Madness, it would reflect and blush.*

And this deserves to be a Lamentation, that so many Young Ones, of sweet Dispositions, amiable Complexions, excellent Parts, should miscarry and steer a wrong Course, at their very entrance into the World; and some of them run into the Devils Mouth,

while

while they are under their Parents Wing; and others when bound out Apprentices, grow Maſters in the Art of Wickedneſs, before they have half learnt the Trade they were put to. O how ſad is it, that you ſhould chooſe Death, rather than Life; that you ſhould doat upon Trifles, purſue Vanities, blow up Bubbles, that are broken as ſoon as blown; buy Husks inſtead of Bread; Scorpions to Sting you, inſtead of Fiſh to Feed you; ſpend the prime of your Strength; waſte the marrow of your Bones; lay out the beſt of your Time, the morning of your Day, your Golden Hours for thoſe things that are not worth your while, and will never turn to a good account, that will not bear your Charges, will not pay you for your Pains; and unleſs you have ſomething more, and better than they, can never prevent your being ruin'd, and everlaſtingly undone. God hath been pleaſed to make you the Lords over inferiour Creatures; the curious Maſter-pieces of this lower World: Why will you forget your ſelves, and diſhonour your ſelves, by carrying your ſelves like the Beaſts that periſh; nay worſe, and more bruitiſhly than they? You are indued with that excellent Principle of Reaſon,

which

which is ſet up by the Divine Hand, for a Light in your Minds; to help your diſcerning between things that differ, and to direct your Steps while you are paſſing through the mazes of an Intricate World: Why then do you walk contrary to the Dictates thereof? You have excellent Souls, of a noble Extract, Heaven-born; Why do you embaſe them? Why inſlave them? Why do they lie groveling upon the Earth? Why do they follow after Vanity, and become Vain? You were made for God, as well as by Him: He was the Author of your being, deſerves to be the End of your Actions. Why do you not Live to him, and Converſe with Him? Why do you ſerve his Enemy? Oh, be you perſwaded to accept of the offers He makes you; Obey the Precepts He gives you; do the Work He ſets you; come into Chriſt who Calls you; take up His Yoke, learn of Him, ſubmit to Him; He is a very good Maſter; none of His Commandments are grievous, but all Holy and Juſt, and Good. His Law, is the Royal Law of Liberty, His Yoak is eaſie, and Burden light; His Waies are Pleaſantneſs and Peace; they are Bleſſed, that Dwell in His Houſe, and will be ſtill Praiſing Him. I have heard many of

them

them bemoaning and complaining of themselves; but not one complaining of him, or of his Works, or of his Provision. I can heartily commend him to you from my own Experience, these Threescore Years: I have been his Covenant Servant; and all this while, He hath been a Loving, Tender, and most Gracious Master to me: Do you try him; I will promise, if you be wise, you will not Repent; Do but enter his Service, and taste how good He is, and He may bore your Ears. I dare say, you will not be given to Change.

Some of your Hearts, have been savingly touched by the Spirit of God, and cast into the mould of the Gospel; weaned from the World, in some Measure; set against Sin, and for God, devoted to his Fear, Honour and Service; Delighting greatly in his Commandments. You are called by his Name; make a good Profession; study Godliness in its Power; express it in your Lives; walk in an Holy Communion with the Saints. Are Actual Church-Members, planted in the House of the Lord? And flourishing in the Courts of your God. It is in you that we rejoice; you are the Crown of your Ministers; the Credit of Religion; the Delight of Aged Disciples.

ples: You are the Olive Plants about our Tables; the Stakes in our Hedge. The Remembrance of you is Comfortable to us, for you, we are frequent and fervent Orators, at the Throne of Grace. With the Bleſſings of Heaven, may you be more and more inriched: The good Will of him that dwelt in the Buſh, be upon you from the beginning of the Year, to the end thereof. The Spirit of Wiſdom teach you, the Spirit of Grace Influence you; the Spirit of Power Actuate you. May your Hearts be warmed with a Cœleſtial Heat; your Graces increaſing, with all the increaſe of God: Your Souls refreſhed, with thoſe Conſolations, that are truly Divine: Your Reſolutions, ſo confirmed and fixed, as in the midſt of moſt furious Aſſaults, to remain unſhaken; and the Arms of your Hands made ſtrong, by the Everlaſting Arms of the God of Jacob.

Make it your Buſineſs, to ſtudy the things of God, to ſearch the Scriptures, in which you think you have Eternal Life. Preſs after greater Meaſures of Knowledge; eſpecially, that which is Experimental. Right Notions are good, but Experiences beſt. Be very humble, thoſe that are ſo, God will guide in Judgment, and teach his Way, and

give

give Grace to. Avoid bad Company, as you would such as have the Plague; yea, as you would avoid the Divel, for he is in them. Husband your time Wisely: Do not trifle it away, nor sleep it away, nor game it away. Look upon gaming, as what will be your Loss, making you poor in Spirituals and Temporals too. Be Companions of them that fear God; especially, when you can, associate with Grave and Judicious Christians. Keep clear of Error; a Man may dye, as well of a wound in the Head, as a stab at the Heart. Study Serious, and Practical Godliness. Lay a good Foundation, and be continually Building upon it. Meddle not with Matters Controversal, which you will find, rather Nuts to break your Teeth, than solid substantial Food, to nourish your Souls. Leave them therefore, till you come to greater Years, and more Maturity of Judgment. Labour thoroughly, to understand the Truths that you hear; and make Conscience of doing all the Duties you know. Never think it enough to sit under the sound of the Gospel; and to profess it, unless you obey its Precepts, and live according to its Rules. Make Religion your main Business, and as such mind it; and let a Vein thereof run thorow all you do.

Help

Help one another in the way and work of God. Exhort, provoke one another to love, and good Works; excite, quicken, ſtrengthen, and encourage one another. Study to be Comforts to your Parents, from whom you had your being (under God) and bringing up. If you be Wiſe, and grow in Wiſdom, and Grace, as in Age and Stature, their Hearts will rejoice, even theirs. Study to be an Advantage to your Maſters, unto whom you are bound; obeying them in ſingleneſs of Heart, not with Eye Service, as Men Pleaſers: but as the Servants of Chriſt, with good Will, doing Service, as to the Lord, not to Men. And do what you can, by your Holy Diſcourſes, by your Prudent Walkings, by your Conſcientious Care, and Pious Examples, to be ſingular Bleſſings to thoſe ſeveral Families, in which, Providence hath caſt your Lives.

As for thoſe among you, who are yet Vain, and Fooliſh, and Frothy, and Profligate, I Adviſe and Deſire you to be ſerious; ſpend ſome time in thinking; conſider your ſelves, and your ways. Think who made you, was it not God? Think what you were ſent into the World for, was it not for Great, Noble, and Everlaſting Purpoſes? Think what

will

will be really your Interest, whether to gratifie a Lust, and pamper a Body, or to save a Soul? Whether to grasp Earth, which you must leave, or to insure Heaven, where you may dwell to all Eternity? Think often of your Change, that you must die, and how soon you may; and what will become of you when you do: And withal, think what manner of Persons you ought to be in all Holy Conversation and Godliness: And then set upon and pursue such a Course of Life, as these Thoughts will direct you to, namely, one agreeable to Scripture-Rule. In short, know, this Sermon which I have this Morning Preached among you, is the Word of the Eternal God; and it will not return to him void; but accomplish the thing, for which it was sent, and that that may prove to be your thorough Sanctification, and Everlasting Salvation, is the hearty Prayers of

From my Study, *Your Affectionate Friend,*
March, 9. 1689.

Samuel Slater.

THE

THE Young Man's Kindneſs TO HIS GOD.

2. JEREMIAH, II.

Thus ſaith the Lord, I remember thee, the Kindneſs of thy Youth.

THeſe Words are a part of that angry and chiding Meſſage, which God commanded his weeping Servant, the Prophet *Jeremiah*, to deliver in his Name to *Jeruſalem*, and ſo to all *Judah*. In them he goeth a great way back, that he might fetch the greater ſtroke, and give the ſmarter blowes. In them alſo he gives us all occaſion to take notice of his not forgetting thoſe things which

did paſs many Years ago, between Him and the Children of Men. We do forget many things that we ſhould do, and many that we have done, but God forgets none; He hath an Excellent Memory, which ſlips nothing. Think of it, O Sinners! to your awakening and amendment. 7. *Hoſea*, 2. *They conſider not in their Hearts, that I remember all their Wickedneſs, now their own doings have beſet them about, they are before my Face.* They are ſet down in his Books, they are Sealed up in his Baggs: and do you think of it, O Saints, to your Comfort, as God remembers you, your Names are written in Heaven ſo he remembers all the Good you do, all the Evil you ſuffer for Him, every Word you ſpeak for his Intereſt, every Sigh you utter over his diſhonour.

I remember the kindneſs of thy Youth. I find Learned Expoſitors are divided in their apprehenſions about theſe VVords: the Queſtion is, VVhoſe Kindneſs is ſaid to be here remembred? whether God's own kindneſs expreſt upon *Iſrael*, or *Iſrael*'s kindneſs in their grateful returns to God: about this Queſtion they differ; ſome look upon it as being the kindneſs which God himſelf had expreſt upon *Iſrael*. *I remember, and often think of it, how I did choſe thee before all the Nations of the World, not for any thing that was in thee, and that might commend thee, and raiſe thy price above theirs: not becauſe thou waſt more, or greater, or better*

better than they, but meerly becauſe I would do it. 7. Deut. 8. He did it becauſe he Loved you, and becauſe he would keep the Oath which he had Sworn unto your Fathers. *And I remember that having choſen thee, I did great things before thee; when my Love was once fixed, it was exceeding free, and thought nothing too much for thee. I delivered thee out of* Bondage, *and brake both the Yoaks and Necks of thine Oppreſſors. And when I had thee in a Wilderneſs, I did moſt comfortably maintain thee, there was no way, yet I led thee in the right way; and when ordinary ways of ſupply were ſhut up, I fed thee every day with Miracles, and at laſt made good my Promiſe to a tittle, in bringing thee to a good Land, flowing with Milk and and Honey.* The VVords may very well be thus taken, and ſo God ſpeaks to them, in order to the aggravation of thoſe Sins, which had ſince that time, and that kindneſs, been committed againſt him by *Iſrael.* It was highly unworthy, diſ-ingenious, and wicked, for them to deſert and forſake him, to caſt off, and turn their backs upon him, after ſo great Mercies beſtowed, after ſuch eminent expreſſions and demonſtrations of Love. Doubtleſs the mercies of God do exceedingly blacken the Sin of man, and render it out of meaſure ſinful. Sins committed againſt the goodneſs of God, which engageth to Obedience, and leads to Repentance, are Sins in grain, and cry loud for Vengeance. If God's own Vineyard have

had great coſt laid out upon it, and afterward bring forth wild Grapes, it is but juſt the next News ſhould be, that God will lay it waſte.

Others do look upon this, as the kindneſs of *Iſrael* to God, expreſſed in their obedience to his VVill, and in their hearkening to his Call, and walking after him as their Guide, in and through a VVilderneſs; tho' indeed it was condeſcending Grace in God to call that kindneſs to him, which really was kindneſs to themſelves. For what though they followed him in a Wilderneſs, certainly that was better than an Houſe of Bondage, and an Iron Furnace, which they had found *Egypt* to be: And what though they went after him in a Land that was not Sown, it led them to a very good Land, which Flowed with Milk and Honey. Beſides, this kindneſs of theirs, ſuch as it was, was mingled with a great deal of unkindneſs, as that of the Creature too too commonly is; there is much Gall with that Honey, much to imbitter it, as generally they do find that have taſted it: there is a wonderful ſcarcity of Virgin Hony, of ſuch pure Love and Kindneſs, as hath nothing to allay it: the experience of loving Friends and neareſt Relations, is able to produce a multitude of Inſtances for the proof of that. *Iſrael* in the VVilderneſs may well ſtand for one: For how *Unbelieving* was that People, after all thoſe great things and works

of

of VVonder, that God had done among them, and for them? How *Disobedient* were they, yea, to ſuch a prodigious degree, as the commiſſion of Idolatry, that abominable thing, which above all other *God* hates? And how *Diſcontented* were they, peeviſh, froward, and murmuring, upon any little or new want, which was ordered out for their Tryal and Exerciſe. In a word, they were prone to forget that God, upon whom they lived every moment, and to quarrel with him, whoſe power and goodneſs they were obliged everlaſtingly to admire: yea, they were likewiſe ready to caſt him off, and did actually ſet up a golden Calf, which they bowed down to and worſhipped, inſtead of that Glorious Majeſty, who had performed all things for them. Yet behold, and ſtand aſtoniſhed! at the unparalell'd Goodneſs of God, manifeſted in the Text before us. He is graciouſly pleaſed to caſt a Mantle over all this their Nakedneſs and Shame. He ſweetly paſſeth by all the iniquities and miſcarriages of their Youth, and mentions nothing but what was pleaſant to him to remember, and would be honourable to them to have Recorded, *I remember the kindneſs of thy Youth.*

I very well know, and have accordingly conſidered that theſe Words are ſpoken to, and concerning a Nation or Church; but I alſo Judge them very applicable to particular Perſons, as they do properly ſuit a Church in

its Youth, ſo not unfitly a Man or Woman; and therefore being unexpectedly called to Preach to a Congregation of young Men, I have choſen them as a good Baſis, or Foundation, upon which may well be Built this Doctrine of Truth.

Doctrine.

That God is moſt graciouſly pleaſed to remember his People, and all their kindneſſes to him, but in a more ſpecial and peculiar manner, *the kindneſs of their Youth.* The Divine Memory is an exceeding large and ſafe Repoſitory, in which innumerable perſons and things are ſtored up. All the Creatures, not only the higheſt and moſt noble, but the meaneſt too, and moſt contemptible: All his Works are known unto him from the beginning of the World, and remember'd by him; and ſo are all their Actions, all their Sufferings, all their Thoughts, and all their Works; all that they have done, and all that they had a mind, will, and purpoſe to do. All theſe he obſerves, and if I may ſo ſpeak, keeps in Heaven an exact and compleat Regiſter of, and is able with Infinite Facility to ſet them in order, and clothed with all their Circumſtances. But let us keep cloſe to our Text and Doctrine; there are three things which God doth take ſpecial Notice of in his People, and think upon.

I. His

I. His People.
II. Their Kindneſſes.
III. The Kindneſſes of their Youth.

He hath ſuch a regard to theſe, that none of them, not the leaſt of them, ſhall be forgotten. Let us touch a little upon them.

I. God doth remember his People; the Perſons of his People: he hath put them into Titles, and ſo made them a part of his Name. Thus when *Moſes* ſaid unto God, *When I come unto the Children of* Iſrael, *and ſhall ſay unto them, the God of your Fathers hath ſent me unto you, and they ſhall ſay unto me, What is his Name? What ſhall I ſay unto them?* Now Mark. 3. *Exod.* 14. 15. *God ſaid unto* Moſes, I AM THAT I AM. *Thus ſhalt thou ſay unto the Children of* Iſrael, I AM, *hath ſent me unto you. And God ſaid moreover to* Moſes, *Thus ſhalt thou ſay unto the Children of* Iſrael, *The Lord God of your Fathers, the God of* Abraham, *the God of* Iſaac, *and the God of* Jacob, *hath ſent me unto you this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all Generations.* That was the Name by which he would be known and remembred among his People. He is the *Holy* one, a God glorious in holineſs, and not only ſo, *but the holy one of Iſrael.* Chriſt is a King, ſet up by God on the holy hill of *Sion*, and He is King of Kings, and alſo the King of Saints. So that He can as ſoon for-

get his own Name and titles of honour as forget his People. *I Remember thee,* ſaith He, in the Text. Though, *O Iſrael,* thy carriage and demeanure toward me, for a great many years, daies without number, hath been ſo croſs and untoward, that thou art ſcarce worth the remembring; if I ſhould forget thee, and diſown, and caſt thee off, I ſhould ſerve thee well enough; yet ſuch ſo great, ſo free and conſtant is my Love to thee, that I remember thee ſtill.

A poor Soul, that hath had his Eyes opened, and had diſcoveries of it ſelf made to it, and thereupon is truly and deeply ſenſible of its own Folly, Unworthineſs, and Sinfulneſs, may in its fears and bitterneſs ſay, *Will God* remember me? Will he harbour and entertain any Kind, or gracious Thoughts of ſuch a ſorry, pitiful *Wretch as I am.* I anſwer, yes, that he will; and his thoughts of thee will be both pleaſing and precious to him. *To him will I look, that is of an humble and contrite Spirit.* Though thou art polluted and defiled, yet if contrite, he will both think of thee, and look to thee; as thou art in his hand, ſo thou art graven upon the Palm of it; thy Name is Written in Heaven.

The *Penitent Thief* upon the Croſs, was a very late Convert; he came into God a little while before he was going out of the World; it was an exceeding ſhort acquaintance that he had with *Jeſus Chriſt,* not above

two

two or three hours ſtanding, at the moſt; but yet poor Creature in that ſhort time, he had learnt to do that which many will not, though they come to Grey Hairs. I mean, he learnt to Pray, and that humbly, heartily, and believingly; *Lord remember me when thou comeſt into thy Kingdom*; and it prevailed, yes ſaith *Chriſt*, I will do it, *This Day thou ſhalt be with me in Paradice.* I will not be in *Purgatory* nor in the place of the *Damned*; the former is but a Fiction, in the latter I have no work to do, but in *Paradice*, and I will neither leave thee here, nor loſe thee by the way, but take thee up thither with me; I will be ſo far from being unmindful of thee, that I will be ſure to take thee with me. Your Perſons, O Saints, are inſeparably united to him; you are the living and indeared members of that excellent Body, of which he himſelf is the glorious Head; from whence it neceſſarily follows, that if he ſhould forget you, he would forget himſelf, and a conſiderable integrating part of his own fulneſs, and ſo be unkind to himſelf, which cannot be.

Secondly, God doth record and punctually remember all the kindneſſes of his People, upon all which he is pleaſed to ſet an higher value than that he ſhould bury any one out of his ſight, there is indeed many a ſingular kindneſs ſhewn by God to us, that we forget, Pſal. 106. 12, *They Sang his Praiſe*, but it follows, they ſoon forgat his works, and him

too

too as well as his works, verſe. 21, *They forgat God their Saviour, which had done great things in* Egypt: thus it is with us, we write theſe things not in Marble but in Sand, but there is not one kindneſs that a Saint ſhews to him which he doth not remember, from firſt to laſt, great and ſmall. As he Seals up the affronts and wrongs and injuries in a bag which his Enemies do to him and his People, ſo he locks up the kindneſſes of his Children and People among his Treaſures. He can tell how ſuch an one acted for him, and ſuch an One ſuffered for him, and ſuch an One denied himſelf for him, a thouſand years ago; it is as freſh in his mind as if it had been but Yeſtrday, 6. Heb. 10. *God is not unrighteous to forget your worke and labour of Love, which ye have ſhewed toward his name, in that ye have miniſtred to the Saints, and do miniſter.* He forgets neither your Love, nor the degree of your Love, nor the conſtancy of your Love, nor the diligence and labour of your Love, nor the evpence ond disburſments of your Love, nothing of all this, no, nothing. He is more righteous, more true and faithfull to his own Covenant and promiſe, more tender over his Peoples intereſt and good than to ſuffer any of this to ſlip out of his mind and thoughts, If you look into *Malachi*, 3. You will find mention made of a very evil time in which the *words of the Wicked were ſtout againſt God.* Oh! How did the wretches taunt him; how did

did they quarrel at his ways and ſervice? How did they diſcommend it, and go about to render it odious in the World? but in that evil time there were ſome acted by his fear and Love, touched with a ſenſe of the diſhonour done him, and thereupon their hearts waxed hot within them, ſo that they could not keep ſilence, *but ſpake often one to another.* viz. of him and for him, they vindicated his honour, and pleaded his cauſe. Now marke what followed, verſe, 16. *The Lord hearkned and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon him Name.* There without doubt he ſet down the names of thoſe Holy Perſons, and their concernedneſs for his intereſt, and every word they ſpake. If any of you ſhew the leaſt kindneſs to a Diſciple in the name of a Diſciple, *i. e.* upon that account for the ſake of Chriſt unto whom He belongs, though it be but a cup of cold water, yet He will be ſure to remember it, and that to ſo good purpoſe, that you ſhall not loſe your reward, the value of which reward ſhall be not according to the worth of the water, but the kindneſs of the Heart and Hand that gave it; It may, O Chriſtians, be your great comfort, that God will be merciſull to your unrighteouſneſs, and that your Sins and Iniquities he will remember no more, but of your good deeds, your fruits of

Love

Love he will forget none; but to come closer to our buſineſs.

Thirdly, God doth delight to remember the *kindneſs of his Peoples Youth.* The firſt bubblings up of their Love, the morning dawns, the early buddings thereof. When Men and Women do not ſtand a great while a queſtioning before they cloſe, *Shall I, Shall I.* But begin with God betimes, when they turn the Folly and Vanity of Childhood and Youth into Holineſs and Piety; when at their going out of the liſts, and entring upon the race of Life, they are not extravagant but direct their ſteps toward Heaven: In ſhort, when they do in good earneſt ſet themſelves to love God as ſoon as they know what it is to Love. This ſhall be ſet down in great Capital Letters, or with an Aſteriſme, a ſingular remarke in his Book of Remembrance, or this ſhall ſtand by it ſelf, as a thing extraordinary, fit for Men and Angels to take notice of, Thus you have it in the Text, *I remember* the kindneſs of thy Youth. I have ſeen the follies of thy Age, I have obſerved how thou haſt doted, been unfaithful to me, and run mad after others; and I take it ill, and am very angry, ſince there was not any cauſe given thee, yet for all that, I cannot but remember the kindneſs of thy Youth, that made ſo deep an impreſſion upon my thoughts and heart, that it is not worn out. I think on it ſtill, I think on it often, that thy firſt Love and beſt Love was placed upon me.

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In Abijah *the Son of* Jeroboam, *there was found ſome good thing toward the Lord God of* Iſrael. 1 Kings, 14, 13. This *Abijah* was a Child, what that good thing in him was, is not expreſt, whether only ſome gracious principle infuſed into him by the bleſſed Spirit of God, or ſome outward acts of Piety, ſome diſcoveries of the fear and love of God, or ſome pretty little appearings for God as his age would bear. Some good thing here was, and the *Lord* took particular notice of it, and did reward it. *He only of all* Jeroboams *Houſe ſhould go to his Grave in Peace*, and have an honourable Burial, all *Iſrael* mourning for him. Though he ſprang from a wicked root, yet he was a plant of righteouſneſs; though he was a member of an Idolatrous, Profane Family, yet he had ſomething of Good in him, though he lay in a filthy noyſome Dunghil, yet he was a Jewel in it, and He ſhould not be loſt, nor thrown away among the Rubbiſh, God would lock him up for a while in the Cabinet of the Grave, and afterward receive him into his Kingdom and Glory. You know that *John* is called *the Beloved Diſciple*, and he lay in the Boſome of Chriſt: And why ſo? Why *John* rather than any of the reſt? It is concluded by ſome Learned Men, the reaſon was, becauſe he was the *Youngeſt* Diſciple. Well then, the kindneſs of Youth God will be ſure to remember. But here the Queſtion will be, what is that kind-

neſs

neſs of Youth, which ſhall be thus remembred? for anſwer hereunto I ſhall go no further than the verſe of which our Text is apart. And I ſhall give it up to you in theſe three things.

1. It is ſuch a kindneſs as unites the Soul to God.

2. As ſets it upon following of God.

3. As holds out in following him notwithſtanding diſcouragements.

Firſt it is ſuch a Kindneſs as doth ſweetly knitt and unite the Soul to God, when the Soul doth ſo ſee his Lovelineſs, and Glory as that it makes him its choice, and gives up it ſelfe to him in a full and compleat reſignation. It ſo likes him as that it muſt have him, and the enjoyment of him, it cannot be ſatisfied, I cannot live, it cannot enjoy himſelf without the enjoyment of God. This is in the Text called *the Love of of Eſpouſals.* Man hath a great many ſuitors, Sin, *Satan* and the World, this and that Idol, creatures, vanities, are Gods rivals and competitors, every one is wooing for himſelf, and would fain win the heart for himſelf, but now when all all other lovers are rejected, all of them have aflat and peremtory denial, and the motion which God makes by his Word and Spirit is hearkned to, embraced and cloſed with, and the Soul reſolves, that it will be for God, and only for God. Though it hath loved other things too much, now it will love them no more:

more: Though other Lords had a Throne in it, and Dominion over it, yet now it will make mention of him, and of his Name only. This is Kindneſs, ſuch as God moſt graciouſly accepts and will remember.

There is indeed no true real Kindneſs to God, till it comes to this; ſpeak never ſo fairly in a way of Profeſſion, Act never ſo abundantly in a way of external Duties, ſhew never ſo much Love with your Lips, all is but a vain and empty ſhew, an Idle Complement, a lifeleſs Image, which when God comes to awake, he will deſpiſe. Come therefore Young men, for it is unto you I now Call; my Voice is to the Sons of men; will you mind and conſider what I ſay? The great God of Heaven and Earth hath a mind to you; His Heart is toward you: He calls to you in the Goſpel; He calls to you, to every one of you, by me this day, *My Son give me thy Heart.* A moſt gracious Call it is; it is a ſign he loves you, and wiſheth you well. That God, who gave thee thy Life and Being, who cloathed thee with Beauty, and girds thee with Strength: That God who keeps thy Soul in Life, and is the Health of thy Countenance: That God who Paves thy Way with Mercy, and beſtows upon thee all the Comforts thou enjoyeſt: That God who gives thee Friends and Trade, and to find favour in the Eyes of thoſe with whom thou haſt

haſt to do; that God doth now ſay, *Do thou give me thine Heart.*

What ſayeſt? What anſwer wilt thou return? Wilt thou comply with the Motion? Shall he win thee as well as woe thee? Oh be ſo much thine own Friend; *and in this thy day know the things which make for thy intereſt.* Let this be the day of Eſpouſals, and then Eternity ſhall be the day of Nuptials. Come, Haſt thou ſuch good thoughts of God, ſuch an Affection for him, that thou canſt heartily accept of him, and ſay this, *God ſhall be my God for ever and ever, the guide of my Youth, yea, and unto Death.* Can'ſt thou cheerfully give up thy ſelf to him, to be framed, faſhoned, commanded, limited, imployed and diſpoſed of by him as he pleaſeth? Art thou willing that thy Maker ſhould be thy Husband? Can'ſt thou in Sincerity and Truth ſay, *Lord, if thou wilt ſtoop ſo low as to be mine, I will be thine, and be glad that I may be ſo, and count it the beſt daies work that ever I did in all my Life.* Sin would have me, and I find it impetuous in its motion; Satan would have me, and he is violent in his Temptations; the World would have me, and that is crafty and reſtleſs in its allurements; but Sin is my Plague and Burden, Satan mine Enemy, the World my Servant, thou only ſhalt be my Lord and Love. I am ready to give up my ſelf in an everlaſting Covenant; nor will I take time, nor put it off till afterward, but do

do it now; all my Heart is and ſhall be thine. the beſt and deareſt of my Love thine, *Pſal.* 73, 25. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I love beſides thee.* Non totus orbis pium delectat ſine Deo. *It is not the whole World that will, without God, make up a portion, or afford a Delight, or ſatisfie the Deſires of a gracious Soul.* This now is kind indeed, God himſelf will account it ſo.

2. Secondly, It is ſuch a kindneſs as ſets the Soul upon following of God, while others run from him; this where ever it is, will iſſue in a running after him: Gods Goodneſs is a Load-ſtone to draw, the Souls kindneſs is a ſpur to quicken. Thus you have it in this verſe, *I remember the kindneſs of thy Youth, the love of thine Eſpouſals, when thou wenteſt after me.* Really there are very ſtrange doings in the VVorld, both among Young and Old. How do many walk antipodes to right reaſon, not by rule, but at random, after the imagination of their own Hearts, and in the ſight of their own Eyes, according to the courſe of the VVorld, which is a wicked courſe, and after the Prince of the power of the Air, though his Deſign is to bring them into the ſame deplorable and irremediable condition with himſelf. They run from God, as if they thought they could never get far enough off, and they ſay unto God, *Depart from us*; they never find him working in their Conſciences, no, nor ſtir-

ring in their Thoughts; but they would be glad to get rid of him, as looking upon his Company as a Burden: And as for his Commandments, they are grievous to them; his Yoak pinches and gauls them, and therefore they draw back, and refuse to yield Obedience; and therefore 2. *Ephes.* 2. are called, *Children of Disobedience*; unperswadable Children, such as will not be wrought upon, neither by Arguments, nor any thing else.

Now it is your kindness to give up your selves so to God, as to follow his conduct; to put your selves into his hand, and let him lead you whither he will. Make him your Pattern, and Imitate him, as far as he is Imitable by you; make his VVill your Rule, and walk by it in your whole Conversation, all the windings and turnings of your Lives, studying an universal Conformity both to Him and it, that it may be compleat.

And then again, when a Soul goeth after God or Christ, for it is all one, *i. e.* when it sits not down with any present Attainments, be they what they will, but is reaching forth, and pressing on to a clearer sight or knowledge of him, to a fuller Obedience to him, to a nearer and more intimate Communion with him, to a greater expressiveness of him, that it might lead his Life, shew forth his Virtues, and carry in the World, as one that is Quickned, Influenced, and Acted by His Spirit. See, Young Ones, that His Mind be

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in you, that none of you do content your ſelves in a ſtate of Nature; though your Perſons be Amiable, your Diſpoſitions Sweet, your Parts Quick, your Acquired Accompliſhments above the ordinary Size, and that you be not content with the enjoyments of the World, that your Parents have, or can give you large Portions, fair Eſtates, and put you out to ſuch Trades, as may afterwards render you very conſiderable among your Neighbours; nay, which is more than all this, ſee that you be not contented with lower meaſures of Grace, or ſmaller Enjoyments of God; but with all your getting, you muſt get Spiritual Wiſdom, and with whatever elſe you have, you muſt have God and Chriſt, and the Spirit, and Grace and Holineſs; yea, and that which you have of theſe is not enough, but you muſt have yet more of God, and more of Chriſt, and more of the Spirit, and more of Grace and Holineſs, and ſtill more and more. Such a Spirit acted in Holy *Paul*, when he ſaid, 3 *Philip.* 10, 11. *I count all but Dung, that I may win Chriſt, and that I may know him, and the power of his Reſurrection, and the Fellowſhip of his Sufferings; being made conformable unto his Death, if by any means I might attain unto the Reſurrection of the Dead.* This is indeed to walk after God; when a Perſon doth not ſet up his Staff, Erect his Pillar (with a *ne plus ultra* upon it) nor take his reſt, until he comes to that full

Viſion and Fruition of God, and communion with him that Heaven doth afford.

Thirdly, This Kindneſs doth comprehend and carry in it, a following of God throngh diſcouragements, be they for quality never ſo great, and for number never ſo many: In the 8. *Mat.* 19. A certain Scribe, a very forward man it ſhould ſeem, came to Chriſt, and ſaid to him, *Maſter, I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt.* As if he had been ſo faſtned in Affection to him, that nothing ſhould part them. But alas! ſoon hot, and aſſoon cold. VVhen our Saviour told him, *The Foxes have Holes, and the Birds of the Air have Neſts, but the Son of Man hath no where to lay his Head.* The man's Zeal vaniſhed, for it was but a Flaſh. He came immediately out of that fit, and rather choſe to ſtay at his own Home, and hugg himſelf in his Enjoyments there, than go with ſuch a Maſter, who had ſo little for himſelf, and ſo made him no Promiſe of any preſent temporal Advantage. From whence it evidently appeared, that the kindneſs which he pretended to Chriſt, was only kindneſs to himſelf. After Chriſt had given His account of His Condition, you find no account at all given of the Scribe; our Lord might go alone for all him, ſince he had no better Lodging, nor Entertainment for his Followers. And how many are there of the ſame Spirit? The VVorld is too full of them.

The

The Kindneſs commemorated in the *Text* was ſo great and powerful, as that it carried them out to a following of the Lord into, and in and through a *Wilderneſs*. He led them into a waſte *Wilderneſs*, a terrible *Wilderneſs*, as it is called, 1. *Deut.* 19. 7. Yet into that they went after him, though there was great liklihood of meeting with pinching Straits, and various Tryals, of being ſcratched with Bryars and Thorns, of hearing the Serpents hiſſing, and the Lyons roaring. They went after him in a Land that was not Sown, and not having had the Labour and Care of man, could not afford much to their Support and Comfort. It was a Land not Sown, and therefore they could not here expect to Reap, nor to have the Joy of Harveſt, nor the filling of Barns, nay, not enough to fill their Bellies. VVhat could they look for here from the place it ſelf? Theſe did go into the *Wilderneſs*, not for love of it, but of him that carried them thither.

Our Saviour told ſome of his Hearers (and doubtleſs he ſpake the Truth) *That they followed him for the Loaves he gave them, and with which he miraculouſly fed them; and neither for his Perſon nor his Doctrine, nor his great and glorious Works.* He is too ſeldom lov'd for his own ſake. *Ubi non vident quæſtum rident Chriſtum.* VVhere men do not ſee Gain coming in, they ſlight Chriſt. A poor Chriſt is not for their turn, will not anſwer the End they pro-

propound to themselves. Then are you good and kind indeed, when you follow Christ, abstracted from all secular terrent Advantages, when you follow him without the Loaves; nay, when you have reason to expect meeting with Stones instead of Bread, and Scorpions instead of Fish; and when for your kindness to Christ, his Truths, and Ways, you are like to meet with the greatest unkindness from the World, with its Fury and Indignation; and when you shall be hated of all men for His Names Sake; when being a Christian, being for the Purity and Power of Religion, is enough alone to make a man a Criminal. This is kindness indeed, which Waters cannot quench, nor Floods drown.

Come, Young-men, in you Affections are strong and fiery; they are very Active and Potent: Do you find them so here in this Case? Can you say (and say true when you say) *Lord, I care not what I lose, so I can but keep thee. I value not what I suffer, so I may but enjoy thee. Thy Presence shall turn a Prison into an Heaven; a loathsome Dungeon, into a Paradice of Delight. I will Sing in a Wilderness, so as I can but enjoy my God there. Yea, when I walk in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, where that King of Terrors doth every foot stare me in the Face, and sets his Dart at my Breast. I will fear none Evil, so long as thou art with me; for thy Rod will be sufficient for my Guidance, and*

thy

thy Staff for my Support, and both together will make my Comforts Live and Flouriſh. Then you have that kindneſs of Youth, which is ſpoken of in the *Text.*

Now, the third Thing which we have to do, is to ſpeak ſomething concerning God's taking notice of, and thinking on this kindneſs of Youth. He doth, and will remember it; yea, he will be ſure to do it. He is not only a Loving God, but Love it ſelf, and is exceedingly taken with the Love of himſelf, whereſoever he finds it. Kindneſs is, and cannot but be very pleaſing and acceptable to the God of Kindneſs. Whence it is, that he is delighted with the Love of the pooreſt Beggar, *Lazarus.* that could find no place here, but in the Street, at the rich Gluttons Door, hath now a Room and Eternal abode, in the Boſom of Chriſt: Yea, and he is pleaſed with the Love of the greateſt and vileſt Sinner. 7. *Luke,* 37. A Woman is ſpoken of that had a Name for being a *Sinner, id eſt.* She was Notorious, Infamous, for her Leud Vitious Life; but the Beaſt was changed, her Love was refin'd, and ſet upon Chriſt; whoſe Feet ſhe waſh'd with her Tears, and wip'd them with the hairs of her head; and her love to him being ſincere and pure, was far more precious to him, than her Alabaſter-box of Ointment, with which ſhe Anointed him. Under the Law indeed the High-Prieſt was to Marry none but a Vir-

gin, that ſo he might have her *firſt* Love. But I ſpeak it to thy comfort, O mourning Penitent Soul! though other things have had thy firſt Love; though thou haſt plaid the Harlot, though thou haſt embaſed thy Affections, and made them Vile, proſtituting them to lying Vanities; yea, though *thou haſt ſcattered thy Waies to Strangers.* 3 *Jere.* 13. and followed after many Lovers, not only yielding to Temptation, but being thy ſelf a Tempter to others, yet if after all thy wandrings and impudencies thou wilt return and be truly Loyal, thou ſhalt be graciouſly received, and God will accept thy *late* Love. Do thou now after all amend thy VVaies and Doings, confeſs and be humbled for thy Sins, and unfeignedly give thine Heart to God; He will bid thee welcome, Kiſs thee with the Kiſſes of His Lips, embrace thee in the Arms of His Mercy, and never upbraid thee with what is paſt. But ſtill, notwithſtanding this rich and condeſcending Grace, know, and conſider, that the Great God, is beſt pleaſed, and moſt delighted with the Love and Kindneſs of your Youth: and it will appear no wonder, if you weigh theſe three things.

I. This is giving God what he moſt deſires.
II. By this you put upon him the greateſt Honour.
III. It is a Preſenting him with the beſt you have.

Firſt,

Firſt, In giving unto God the Kindneſs of your *Youth*, you give him that which he doth moſt deſire, and is, as I may ſay, earneſtly ſet for. 7. *Micah*, 1. *My Soul deſired the Firſt Fruit.* The VVords are Metaphorical, or Alluſive. You know when things come firſt, ſuppoſe Cherries, Apricocks, or Peaſe; and the like, they are much ſet by; they are counted fit for the Tables of Princes, Nobles, and great Perſonages. The common Proverb tells us, *They are Food for Ladies, they are Meat fit for Breeding and Longing Women, and they will fetch a very great Price.* Now, ſaith God, take meaſure of me, an Infinite being by your Line in this particular. As a VVoman with Child doth greatly long for things ſhe likes, when they come firſt, and are firſt ripe; ſo doth my Soul deſire and long for your early Converſion to me, for the firſt Fruit of your Life, and of your Day, for your beginning betimes to Love, and Fear, and Serve me.

It is as if he He ſhould have ſaid, I long, my Soul longeth. But *Lord*, what is it that thou longeſt for, what is there without theſe that can poſſibly raiſe up ſuch deſires in thee? Thou wanteſt nothing, being thine own life and fulneſs, and ſatisfaction, thou haſt all in thy ſelf; yea, thou art all in all, the Eternal Son of Righteouſneſs, the Fountain of Bleſſings, the boundleſs bottomleſs Ocean of good-

goodneſs, who mayeſt ſay to all the Works of thy Hands, Men and Angels ſtand aſide, I have no need of you. So that there is nothing without thee, that can make any addition to thee, or throw one mite into thy Treaſury. Yet for all that, ſaith God, I long, though I have infinite Delights, yet I have my earneſt Deſires too. And if you would know what it is for, I will tell you, it is the firſt ripe Fruit. It is for the firſt of your years, Children, young Ones, the firſt of your Love, and the firſt of your ſtrength. Yonder are ſuch Young Men, and young Maidens, it is pitty they ſhould Miſcarry, pitty they ſhould be Spoiled and Debauched, they have precious and immortal Souls, it is pitty they ſhould caſt themſelves away, and be ſlaves to a Divel here, and Fewel for unquenchable Fire hereafter: Oh! that they were mine: Oh! that they would ſet their Hearts upon me, for then I would ſet them in ſafety, and make them happy for ever.

And as *God* doth thus greatly deſire the kindneſs of your youth ſo, when he meets with it, He doth take no loſs contentment and delight in it; it is mighty ſweet and pleaſant to him, above what you are able to conceive. This we may gather from thoſe indearing expreſſions, which He is pleaſed to make uſe of, in *Hoſea* 9. 10. *I found Iſrael like Grapes in the Wilderneſs; I ſaw your Fathers as the firſt ripe in the Fig-tree at her time.* Think if you can how

how exceedingly a poor Traveller is delighted, what an exuberance of Joy he feels within himſelf on a ſuddain, when walking in an hot and parching Seaſon through a dry and barren Wilderneſs, where his Skin is almoſt Bliſter'd, and his Throat dried up with Thirſt; he doth unexpectedly meet with a Vine plentifully laden with large and lovely cluſters of delicious Grapes; and with a Fig-tree, having upon it the firſt ripe Figs, under the Shadow whereof he may ſit and reſt his weary Limbs; and of the Fruit thereof he may freely take, and Eat, till he find his Thirſt removed, his Heat cooled, his Spirits revived, nouriſhment given him, with the renewing of his ſtrength. Now, ſaith God, I am as much pleaſed as he, and infinitely more with the kindneſs of your Youth. An early Convert, a young *Samuel*, a young *Joſiah*: *David* a Stripling, a young *John*, a young *Timothy*, a gracious *Obadiah* that feared the Lord from his Youth. Such an one, ſuch an one that ſets out for Heaven in the Morning of his Age, truly Gracious, that hated Sin, and bid farewell to Toies and Trifles, and ſet himſelf betimes to be ſerious and holy; my Servant, my Friend, devoted to my Fear, ſtudious of my Will, deſigning my Glory, pleaſed with my Company. Now in him I have what I would have, what I long for. He, or She, ſo ſpiritulized, living in ſuch a manner, walking at ſuch a rate, are to me like Grapes in the Wilderneſs,

and

and he will be ſure to think of ſuch. You will remember ſuch a Friend as ſatisfieth your longing, as 2 *Samuel* 23. 15, 16, 17. *David was in an Hold, and a Garriſon of the Philiſtines in* Bethlehem; *and* David *longed, and ſaid, Oh! that one would give me Drink of the Water of the Well of* Bethlehem, *which is by the Gate. And the three mighty men brake thorough the Hoſt of the Philiſtines, and drew water out of the Well of* Bethlehem, *that was by the Gate, and took it, and brought it to* David: *theſe things did theſe three mighty men.* They ſatisfied the longing of *David*, and ſuch an *Heroick* Act ſhould not be forgotten; the divine Spirit hath taken care to put it upon record, and will not the gracious God do this much more? Yes, he will. I commend this to your frequent Meditations, that the Heart and Love of Young Ones is Gods Delight; It is that which he doth greatly deſire, and when you and ſuch as you are do turn to *Him*, and ſet Your Selves to ſeek and Serve *Him*, you do, ſpeaking after the manner of Men, Satisfie his Longings; you are the Perſons that do quiet *His* Spirit, you are his Joy, and *His* Jewels, and He will forget Lords and Ladies, the great Ones of the Earth, if wicked, to Remember You.

Secondly, In placeing upon God, the love and Kindneſs of your Youth, you do put a Singular Honour upon *Him*; this is an Excellent and moſt Remarkable way of Glorifyng Him,

Him, becauſe by this means you give *Him* the Preheminence, you do prefer *Him* before all other things; Loving *Him* firſt, you proclaim it to all the World, that you count *Him* Beſt. Thoſe Young Men that do reſolve Firſt to gratifie their Luſts, and to take their fill of pleaſures, and to mind the things of the world and then think of coming into God afterward, and that it will be ſoon enough twenty or forty Years, when Old Age hath ſeized them, and Gray-hairs are upon them, concluding it time enough to ſet out and begin their Journey to Heaven, when they are come to their Crutch, and have one Foot in the Grave; they I ſay, do moſt unworthily and baſely Poſt-pone God, they undervalue and Dethrone him; they ſet him out of his place, and put the higheſt affront upon him that can be, giving little and low things, deceiving and defiling things the preference. This is to diſparage God, to throw dirt in the face of God; if theſe thought God the beſt and Chiefeſt good, they would ſeek and ſerve him in the firſt place, and would be reſtleſs without him, and think nothing too much for him; whereas thoſe that are more ſet for the Comforts of the World, or the Pleaſures of Sin do offer him an unſpeakable greater Indignity, than they would do to the moſt Glorious Monarch upon Earth, who ſhould attempt the ſetting of a Beggar or a Puppy in his Throne; and thoſe who with

all

all their might purſue theſe things in a total forgetfulneſs and neglect of God, do tell the world that they count him altogether needleſs, and ſo they have but Corn and Wine, good Trading, and full Baggs, can do well enough without him.

But now, when Young Ones devote themſelves, and ſet their Hearts betimes to ſeek the Lord God of their Fathers, when they make it their buſineſs to inqure after him, that they might know him, when they account his Service, perfect freedom, and apply to it with all their might; when they make Communion with him, the Work of their day, and comfort of their Lives; when in ſtead of exalting Folly, and drawing Iniquity, as with Cart-Ropes, they ſet to the Cordial diligent Practice of Piety, and Religion; When they taſte far more Sweetneſs in the Work of Self-denial, keeping under the Body, and the greateſt difficulties and ſeverities of Godlineſs, than in the Pleaſures of Sin, which are Frothy, Dirty and but for a Seaſon; when they choſe Godlineſs for the trade which they will mainly and principally drive in the World once more; when they count the Lord Jeſus altogether Lovely, the Chiefeſt of ten Thouſand, and eſteem the enjoyment of him, greater Riches than the Treaſures of ten Thouſand Worlds; this is indeed highly to Honour God, this is to uſe him and carry toward him as becomes a God, this is to give him

him the preference; this is to ſet him in his own place, in the Throne, and to make all other things his Foot-ſtool, and to teach thoſe that know and obſerve them, what Notions and Valuations they ought to have of him, and how they ſhould demean themſelves and carry towards him, making all other things, the Neareſt, Deareſt, and moſt Beloved to keep their place and diſtance from God, and theſe that do thus ſhall never be forgotten; he himſelf having promiſed to Honour them that Honour Him, and for certain He will be as good as his word.

Thirdly, There is in this kindneſs of *Youth* a giving unto God, the beſt we have; a bringing unto him ſuch an offering as Righteous *Abel* did, *the Firſtlings of his Flock and the Fat thereof.* Geneſis, 4, 4. *Ex optimis optima.* Of the beſt things he had, he choſe the beſt for God. God was, Saith *Fagius*, great in the heart and eye of *Abel*, and therefore *Abel* cull'd out the Greateſt and Choiſeſt for God. And ſaith that Text, *the Lord had reſpect unto* Abel *and to his Offering*, he turned and looked toward both with a ſmileing Countenance, as one that was well pleaſed. The truth is, if we look to things and judge of them according to their own Nature, and Intrinſick Value, the beſt we have to preſent unto God, is not worthy of his acceptance. Our Firſt Love, and Our Deareſt Love, is Polluted, and deſerves to be Rejected, becauſe it is in, and comes from ſuch Cor-

Corrupt and Defiled Hearts, but the Love and Kindneſs of our Youth is the beſt we have, and that through the Grace, and Mercy of God in Chriſt, ſhall be accepted, now this is the beſt, it is like the preſenting him with the Male of the Flock.

What a lamentable thing is it! what a burning ſhame for Men and Women, to give Sin the Marrow, and leave God nothing but the Dry Bone, that is more fit for the Dunghill, or a Dog. They will run in their Youth and Strength with full ſpeed like ſwift *Dromedaries*, in the crooked paths of Sin, as if they could never get far enough from God, nor reach ſoon enough to Hell; and then they will think of creeping to Heaven at the Laſt, when they can ſcarce ſtir Hand or Foot. An Unclean Luſt ſhall command their Time, and Purſe and Strength, their very Life will they give unto the Cruel. A Drunken humour ſhall be gratified with Songs, Shouts and Bruitiſh Huzza's, and I pray, what will theſe extravagant Prodigals leave for God? O, he ſhall have their Sick Beds Sighs and Groans, and poſſibly, a Lord have Mercy upon us, when they think they can live no longer, but a day or two (at moſt) is like to carry them off, then ſend for the Miniſter to Pray, they call in help for the Body at firſt, but not for the Soul as long as there is any hope of Life. O Wretched Spirit that poſſeſſeth and acts theſe perſons! This muſt needs be called

Offering

Offering to God a Corrupt thing, the Blind and the Lame, and the Torne, and well may he say to such with utmost Scorn and Indignation. 1 Malachi, 8. *Offer it now unto thy Governour, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy Person.*

But now, Young Men, when you come into God betimes, and consecrate the Morning of your Age to Him and his Service; then, though you do not give him all that he deserves, yet you give him the best you have: He hath the Flower, the Cream; and let me tell you, this is the way to give Him all you have; it is the way to secure your All for him, the whole of your Life, the remaining part of your time: The Consecrating of the Youth to God, is a good Pledge and Earnest of Old Age, an excellent assurance that you will be his as long as you have any Being, according to the counsel given to Parents and Tutors, by *Solomon* the wisest of Princes; Proverbs, 22. 6. *Train up a Child in the way that he should go, and when he is Old he will not depart from it.* This is a dreadful Scripture for Profane Parents to think upon; they train up their Children in a way of Sin, thy set before them bad Examples, of which they see too many without doors, they teach them to be Froward and Proud, and Quarrelsome, to Curse and Swear, and be Drunk, to Profane Sabbaths, and Scoffe at Religion, and speak evil of the ways of God and them that fear Him, and

what are such Children like to come to when they come to be Men and Women. What do such Parents do but what in them lies, to bore their Ears and to make them sure for the Divel? But now when Parants do Initiate their Children betimes in Holiness, when they indeavour to principle them Holily, and to direct their steps into the waies of Truth and Peace, and those Young Ones imbibe and follow those Instructions and Counsels, it is a ground of hope (though not an assurance) that they will be stedfast; it is, as I said, the most probable way to it, and though it be but a childish Goodness which is in Children, yet it may improve and grow up to Maturity, and come to be a manly one; This is a Prepossessing of the Soul for God; this will be a means to obviate Temptations, and though not to prevent them, yet to arm you for the resisting of them; this is the way to have Holiness increase in strength, as your years do in number; and to what a great and eminent stature in Grace may you attain, if God shall please to multiply your daies, and by consequence how singularly useful may you be in your Generation.

USES.

The Doctrinal part being thus spoken to and finished, I come to the improvement of the truth in a way of Application; and in the first

first use my Discourse shall be directed to you who have spent much time, and run out many Years in the World, but did not in your Youth shew any kindness to God. No, no, you remember your Consciences tells you, that all your kindness run in another Channel, another way to other Objects, to Creatures, to Vanity, to Sin, and there you were profusely lavish, there you spent all, and had none left for God and your Souls; you lived without God in the World and found no miss of Him; you did not live in greater, no not in so great Unmindfulness and Neglect of any thing as of God. I am very confident there are a great many in *England*, and in *London*, that mind their Horses and Hauks, and Dogs, far more than they do their God, and, possibly, this is your case, this Guilt cleaves to you. Your Childhood and Youth were Vanity, altogether Vanity, without any mixture. You were perfect *Strangers* to God, and did not make out after any acquaintance with him, you were utter *Enemies* to God, and would not throw down your Weapons, nor seek Peace and Reconciliation with Him; though you often heard of a Mediator and Daies-Man, that if heartily desired would have been ready to lay hand upon both, and so have made up the Breach, you never beg'd him to stand your Friend. As you were Conceived in Sin, and brought forth in Iniquity, so you willingly continued in the very Gall of

Bitterness and bond of Iniquity, adding Sin to Sin, as if the heap would never be high enough, nor the *Ephah* full enough, nor the Score great enough. It is like that you do please your selves herein, but I do heartily pitty you, and shall give you some seasonable, serious Counsel, which you will find profitable, if God shall please to give you an heart to follow it. And Oh that you would go home, and make it your business to Pray for such an Heart? That is the way to have it.

First, Take shame to your Selves, upon the account thereof, and blush greatly before him, because you had no kindness for Him, from whom you received so much. Do not you know that you could not Live a day without Him, no nor a Moment. As your dependance upon Him was continual, so it was absolutely necessary; inseperable from you as Creatures. It was He that held your Souls in Life, and continued your Breath in your Nostrils, else you had, before this, dropt into the Grave, it was his merciful Patience that interposed and prevented, else you had long since taken up your Everlasting abode in Hell, and been there roaring among Divels, and Damned Spirits in Flames. Aand how could you be so Wickedly disingenuous, as for so many years together to live without Him, by whom you lived all that while? Consider again, to whom you are beholden, for all the good things you have had. Did not all your Supplies come from

his

his Bounty, and were not all your Comforts, his Allowances? It was he that Commanded his Creatures to serve you, that put that Virtue into them, by which you have been Refreshed, and that sweetness into them with which you have been delighted; and yet would you for all this be so Monstrously Ingrateful as to have no Love for Him, to do no service to Him, but carry your selves so strangely and perversly as that he received no honour from you. O foolish People and unwise, who have thus requited the Lord your God. Is this the way to encourage your Hopes in Him for the future?

Those who are truly Gracious, and made partakers of a right Spirit, have Loved *Him*, with great dearness of Affection, and been fervent in Spirit, when serving of *Him*, and have walked before *Him* in their Uprightness and Integrity; and yet after all, they take shame to themselves, and are heartily angry with themselves, because they are so Wofully deficient in their returns; because they have loved Him no more, and serv'd Him no better, walked no more closely with *Him* and in no greater exactness. What groans did *Paul* utter, because, when he would do good Evil was present with him to hinder him, to divide him, to divert him; so that how to perform that which is good he found not, and because of a Law in his Members, warring against the Law in his mind, which brought him

into Captivity: this he counted his misery and wretchednes, and long'd as much for his deliverance from it, as a poor Slave Chained to the Oar for his releafe. How do theſe confeſs and bewail their late Beginnings and ſlow Proceeding, their Dulneſs, and Deadneſs, and Straightneſs, every reflection they make upon it, is Bitter and Griveous to them; and if it be ſo with them, how much more ſo ought it to be with you: if it did become an *Ezra* to bluſh before God for the Sins of others, it greatly becomes you to bluſh, and be even confounded, who have ſuffered your daies to run out to waſte, and not loved God at all, nor ſerved *Him* at all, but ſet your heart upon, and ſpent your ſtrength for Sin his Enemy. The Lord grant that you may now be duly affected with this, and go from hence grieved. For, taking ſhame to your ſelves, now for it is the way to prevent Gods putting you to ſhame at the laſt and great Day, and pouring Contempt upon you, which ſhall ſtick to Eternity. But that is not all I would ſay to you,

Secondly, Humble your Selves, and that deeply, for the unkindneſs of your Youth, which you have ſhewn to God: for this is certain, look where you ſo will find it. that Man, or Woman, that had not any kindneſs for God, did exceedingly Abound in acts of Unkindneſs, where no Good Fruit, there Wild Grapes, if you have not done any Ser-

vice

vice for Him, you have committed a great many Sins againſt Him. you cannot poſſibly underſtand your Errors, nor tell how often you have Offended. Oh! the Vanity of your Youth. The Traſgreſſions of your Youth. How were you then like a company of wild Aſſes Colts, Ungovernable, untameable, that cared for no body; as the Oxe will Labour, and the Horſe travel, the Oxe will ſubmit to the Yoke, and the Horſe will be Rul'd, turn'd Curb'd, by the Bridle, but the wild Aſs, *Job*, 39. 5. *Regards not the Crying of the driver*, neither his Whip nor his Whiſtle, and ſuch an one, perhaps, waſt Thou. *Solomon* tells us, Prov. 22. 15, that, *Folly is bound up in the heart of a Child*, it is Bound not with ſmall Threads, but Strong Cords, ſo that it is hard to take it off; it is bound up in him like a pack, and what uſually is the work of Youth, but to open that Pack, to exalt their own Folly, and in their Garbs and Geſtures, and Talk, and Carriage to ſhew it abroad, to all that know them and converſe with them. How do they go up and down dropping one piece of Folly here and another there, juſt as a Beggar doth his Vermine; at every door he comes. Now I adviſe you to lie low before God, and abhor your Selves in His Sight upon the account hereof; and for the ſinfull breaking of the Law of God then, let there be kindly breaking of your Hearts now; you know the

Carleſneſs, Wantonneſs and Extravagancies of Youth, do generaly iſſue in the Pains and Aches of Age. Oh! that the Sins of your Youth, may iſſue in the Repentings and Gracious Mournings of your Age. Follow *Ephraims* Example, *Jere.* 31. 18. Repent, Smite upon your Thigh, be Aſhamed, yea, even Confounded, becauſe you have been as Bullocks unacuſtomed to the Yoke, would not Draw in the Yoke of Chriſt, but choſe rather to be Sons and Daughters of *Belial*. Know this, Sin muſt have Sorrow; and it is far more deſirable to have it in this World than in the next.

Thirdly, Do not contentedly, and quietly lie under that load of Guilt, which you have contracted and bound upon your Selves, and is heavy enough to break your Hearts, and ſink you into Hell; but flie to Mercy, and Beg of God the Pardon of the Sins, and Unkindneſſeſs of your Youth; and be earneſt with him for it, as thoſe that know your preſent Peace and Everlaſting Happineſs; depend upon it, and pleaſe not your Selves, with a perſwaſion that your Pardon is paſt in Heavens Court, but make out after the Sealing thereof, in the Court of Conſcience, being fully aſſured of this, that unleſs God be pleaſed in the riches of his Grace to *Pardon* them, you will to your Grief and Terror *Poſſeſs* them. If any of you are Strangers to the Holy Scriptures, and have not read that Paſſage

of

of *Job* which you have in the 13. *Job*, 26. I deſire you to mind it now, and frequently to conſider it. *Thou writeſt bitter things againſt me, and makeſt me to poſſeſs the iniquities of my Youth.* This God may do more waies than one, Sometimes he doth it by hampering Men with affliction upon their Bodies, cauſing thoſe Pains, and Torments to ſeize them, and abide upon them, that they had been ſowing the Seeds of, in their Youthful Exceſſes, and Extravagancies. A Looſe and Diſolute Youth doth moſt commonly bring after it a Teadious and Siokly, Old Age. Sometimes God doth it by letting Conſcience looſe upon them, it begins it may be to talk and diſturb them, and they are angry, and ſtop its Mouth, holding the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs. It is offended at ſome Notorious Evil, that they have committed againſt Light, & it begins thereupon to Stir you and Buſtle, but love quietneſs, & to take your own Courſe without hearing of it again, and ſo you rock it aſleep: but in Old Age, God comes and Wakes this Roaring Lyon, and when he falls upon you with Fury, what Frights doth he put you to; how doth he Rend and Tear, and Break your Bones? Sometimes God doth this by letting fall a drop of wrath into the Soul, filling it with his Terrours, ſpeaking to it in his Wrath, and Vexing it in his Soar Diſpleaſure, and when he doth any of theſe things, then he doth write Bitter things againſt

a Man. The pains of the Body are often Acute, and very Bitter. How do Poor Creatures under them Tumble, Sweat, Roar out? What then is the Sting of Conscience. What then is the Wrath of God? Who knoweth the Power of his Anger, the Efficacy of his frown? Let me assure you Sinners, though you may now find the Commission of Sin Pleasant, you will to your Cost and Anguish, find the Possession of it Dreadful. The Possession of the Sins of Your Youth will take away the Sweetness, and Delight, which otherwise you might Taste in the Worldly Possessions of Your Age.

Therefore I Beseech you, as you love your own Peace and Ease, and Comfort, while you are here, be perswaded and prevailed with to flie with all the Speed you can make to Free-Grace, that City of Refuge for Guilty Malefactors. Lay Hold upon the Horns of the Alter; look out for the Sprinkling of the Blood of the Lord Jesus upon you, that so the Wounds of Conscience may be heal'd, the Sting may be taken out, and all Sins Blotted out when the times of Refreshing shall Come, from the presence of the Lord. You are not to suffer Sin to rest upon your Brother, much less upon your Selves: If Sin rest upon you, it will certainly break your Rest. I know not how that Man can rest in his Bed, or in his Grave, that lies down in either or both, with his Bones full of the Sins of his Youth. It is

certain

certain, if Sin doth noth not break your hearts in Sorrow, it will break your Necks with a Vengance. Follow therefore the Example of Holy *David*, and take the ſame courſe which he did long before you, and to his Comfort found Succeſsful. *Pſalms* 25. 7. He went in the ſenſe of his Guilt, and humbly put this Petition into the hand of Mercy, *Remember not the Sins of my Youth, nor my Trangreſſions: according to thy Mercy Remember thou me, O Lord, for thy goodneſs ſake.* It is good for us to Remember them to our Humiliation, that God may not remember them, ſo as to charge them upon us to our Condemnation; and I cannot but tell you, your Pillows muſt be very ſoft or your Hearts are very hard, if you can ſleep ſoundly without a Pardon, and the Knowledg of it. What Sleep, when your Damnation Sleepeth not? Eat, Drink and be Merry over the Flames of Hell. What, be quiet and ſecure, when Divine Juſtice purſueth thee, and for ought thou knoweſt, may the next moment give the fatal Blow, and knock thee down into the Bottomleſs Pit? What art thou made off?

Fourthly, Sit down and conſider, and conſidering admire that kindneſs which God was pleaſed to ſhew you in your Youth, though He then received none but unkindneſs from you, and indeed he ſhow'd you much Mercy and Goodneſs followed you, there was a daily loading you with his Benefits, you cannot

but

but be Free, and ready to acknowledg it, to the Glory of his Name, unleſs you will ſhew your ſelves Monſters for diſingenuity, and Ingratitude. Who was it but He, that wonderfully Formed you in the Womb, and Graciouſly Preſerv'd and Maintain'd you in it, ſo that you did not find your Grave there, but brought you forth alive, and in your Perfect Shape? The Eye of whoſe careful Providence but His; watched over you, when you hung upon the Breaſt, and were Dandled upon the Knee? Who took you by the hand and put ſtrength into your Limbs, and both taught, and enabled you to Go? Was it not God, in whom we all live, and move, and have our Being? Who hath ever ſince furniſhed your Tables, and filled your Bellies, and cloath'd your Backs, and given you all things comfortably; plentifully to enjoy? Was it not that God who Fainteth not, neither is Weary of taking care of his Creatures, and doing Good to Them, but Renews and Repeats his Mercys every morning; yea, every moment? Who was it that did moſt Seaſonably interpoſe between you and thoſe Dangers, unto which you were frequently expoſed, was it not God? Who did carry you in the Arms of His Power, and upon the Wings of his Providence, and often and often reſcued you out of the Jawes of Ruine. In Your Infancie, Childhood and Youth, you did meet with ſo many, you did run your Selves

into

into so many, that it would have been a thing altogether impossible, for you to have attained unto man's Estate, had it not been for the care of that God, who keepeth your Bones, numbers your Hairs, counts your Steps, tells your Wanderings, and doth neither Slumber, nor Sleep. It may be you had prudent Fathers, affectionate Mothers, loving Friends, tender Nurses, faithful Servants, but all these together would not have made a guard sufficient for you without God, nor would all their care have been your Protection, and Security without this.

You have every one of you abundant cause to say as *David* doth in the 57 *Psalm*, 2. *It is God that performeth all things for me.* This is of God, and that of God, and all of God, every Mercy that you have received throughout the whole course of your lives, was a Mercy of Gods sending, and every deliverance that you have had from enemies troubles dangers, was a deliverance of Gods Commanding. And these are so many that you cannot number them; they are far more than your days have been; nay than the Hairs upon your heads. Nay, *David* went a great deal higher, Psalms, 139. 17, 18. *How precious are thy thoughts unto me O God! How great is the Sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the Sand: when I awake I am still with thee.* Though He did repeat the thoughts of God and his Goodness every day,

day; though when ever he waked in the Morning, he fell to considering what God was to him, and had done for him; yet he found so many Mercies crouding in, and presenting themselves to his View and Consideration, that he concluded it as possible for him to number the Sands, upon the Sea Shore as them. *i. e.* It was a Work altogether above his Power; and then add to this, that all the kindnesses were shewn to you by God in the midst of very great unkindnesses, which you did shew to him. *His* Mercies followed you, even when you did run away from *Him*. *He* remembred you when you forgot *Him*. *His* Bowels yearned over you when you did spurn at them. *He* drew you with the Cords of a Man, yea; with kindness did *He* draw you, when you drew Iniquity with Cords of Vanity and Sin, as with Cart-Ropes, in a word, *He* did daily load you with his Benefits, when you loaded *Him* with your Iniquities, and that is it which doth exceedingly commend his goodness, and sets a Singular Lustre and Beauty upon all the Egresses and expressions thereof, as Sins under and against great and multiplied Mercies, are out of measure Sinful, so Mercies given out and continued, notwithstanding hainous and reiterated Provocations are very admirable and obliging Mercies. Therefore in this, at last, shew your selves to be Men, in speaking his Praise, and giving him the *Honour* of all the good that *He* hath done for you: and then.

Fiftbly,

Fifthly, Learn to be Ingenuous, begin to be ſo: and double your Kindneſs unto God now. Have you hitherto been Rebellious? Now be Obedient to him: Have you brought forth Abundance of Wild Grapes? Now bring forth Good Fruits: Thoſe of the Spirit, liſten to the Apoſtles Counſel, and put it in Practice. 6. *Romans* 19. *As ye have yielded your Members Servants to Uncleanneſs, and to Iniquity, unto Iniquity; even ſo now yield your Members Servants to Righteouſneſs unto Holineſs.* You have loſt all your beſt Time, your flouriſhing Age, your precious Golden Hours; ſee that you do loſe none of the Remainder: For indeed, the fag-end of Time is too good to looſe; *Parſimonia in Fundo*, to ſpare at the bottom, when the Veſſel is almoſt out is counted too late; but better late, than never: For any thing that you know, there are but a few Sands left in your Glaſs, a little, very little ſhort Time is behind; and therefore, it is your Wiſdom to improve all, and ſquander away none of it. Are you come into the Vineyard now? Remember, how long you ſtood idling in the Market Place, poſſibly, it was not till the Ninth or Eleventh Hour, that you were perſwaded to buckle to Buſineſs: O, do not loiter, now that you are there; Do not do the Work of the Lord ſlightly, and negligently; Do not freeze at the Plough; Do not tarry, as if you could get an happy Eternity, by Sleeping away Time; but gird up the Loyns of your Mind, and make

haſte

haſte to the Kingdom of God, and take pains for Salvation: Work diligently, Love God dearly, with all your Hearts; live Holily, in all Holineſs; walk Regularly, as thoſe that are to ſet Copies, and give out Examples unto others. Have no Fellowſhip with the Works of Darkneſs, which end in Shame, and Death; but maintain a cloſe and conſtant Communion with the Father, and with his Son, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Are you now at laſt ſavingly inlightned and principled, and light in the Lord? Do you ſhine as Lights, and burn as Lamps, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe Generation? You need never be Idle; for as God hath given every one Time enough for his Work, ſo *He* hath given to thee, and me, and all, Work enough for our Time; if you will look about you, you will find enough to do; ſo much to mend, and ſo much to make; this Dirt to be caſt out, to be waſhed off; that Thing, and Twenty more to be ſet in their right place, and order: If you will but ſearch, you will preſently find a great deal is to be done; well, what ever your Hand findeth, be ſure that you do it with your might, yea, with all your might.

And I beſeech you, for the quickning and ſpurring you on, do you frequently repeat in your Minds, ſuch Conſiderations as theſe. Be now, and for the future, as lively in Duty as you will, as fervent in Spirit, and as Induſtrious in Buſineſs; you cannot thereby make a-

mends for your fore paſt Folly and Neglect, never recover the Loſſes, that you have already made. Had you begun early, in the Morning, at the Third, nay, at the Firſt Hour of the Day, and held on till now, in the way of your Duty, and acted all along, without Intermiſſion or Abatement to the utmoſt of your Strength; God would infinitely have out-done you. He had dropt Mercies faſter, than you Duties. He had done unſpeakably more in a way of Kindneſs, than you in a way of Service. And then, conſider, what he will do: You may by what is in his Promiſe, underſtand what is in his Purpoſe. There are ſuch Things reſerved, as Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor have entred into the Heart of Man. There is the Joy of the Lord, for a Faithful Servant. Everlaſting Reſt, for the diligent Labourer. The Inheritance of a Child, for him that hath done the task ſet him. All this, beſtowed not for the Merit, or Worthineſs of the work done; but by the Grace, and free Favour of God. When Sinners have filled their *Ephah*, of Sin, then there ſhall be laid on the Talent of Lead. And when you are come to the Meaſure of your Stature, and have filled up the Meaſure of your Duties, then you ſhall have a weight too; but what? a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of Glory. And therefore, now I earneſtly beſeech you, be ye ſtedfaſt, immoveable, abounding; always abounding in the Work of the Lord, knowing

that he doth Richly deſerve it at your Hands, and that your Labour, though never ſo great, ſhall not be in vain. O, let theſe Things that I have ſpoken, be Welcom and Acceptable to you, elſe you will repent of it one day; and do you with ſpeed, ſet upon the Practice of them now. You know not, what you do loſe, nor what you may, by looſing a little time. If you did begin to do this before, I ſhall rejoice in it, and do you bleſs God, and go on.

USE. II.

In the Second Uſe of this point, I ſhall direct my Diſcourſe, which will be in an hortatory way to thoſe of you that are Young. You who are yet in the Morning of your Age, and in the Prime of your Strength; who are but coming, or juſt come into the World, under the Wing of your Parents, or the Tuition and Conduct of Maſters, or but newly come to be your own Maſters; though I can ſcarce allow that Word; for when you have ſerved out your Apprentiſhip, and ſet up for your Selves, you ſtill have a Maſter in Heaven, to whom you ought to be Obedient, and muſt be Accountable. You are not ſo hardened in your Hearts, as thoſe VVretches are, who have grown Grey in VVickedneſs: Though you brought Sin into the World with you, yet you have not made it a Second Nature, by a long continued Cuſtom. You are yet *adum*

et molle lutum, moiſt and ſoft Clay, and ſo an Impreſſion may be more eaſily made upon you. I ſpeak to you, as in dear Love, ſo not without great hope, that my VVords will be acceptable to you, and my advice take: Why did you deſire me to Preach to you this Day? unleſs you were reſolved to bring with you teachable and tractable Spirits; and not only to hear thoſe Scriptural Councels I ſhould give you, but likewiſe to follow them. Methinks that is a very affecting Paſſage, that we find in the 33. *Ezek.* 32. *Lo! thou art unto them, as a very lovely Song, of one that hath a very pleaſant Voice, and can Play well on an Inſtrument; for they hear thy Words, but they do them not.* That was hearing not to Salvation, but to greater and more dreadful Condemnation. I would, yea I do hope better things of you; and becauſe I Preach to you in hope, I therefore do it with the greater delight. You know my time for preparation for this work, was very ſhort, but it is no matter for that, ſo my Succeſs among you may be very great; and there are two things I deſire of you; deny them not, as you love your Souls, and as you will anſwer the contrary at your Peril.

I. Begin betimes to ſhew kindneſs to God; let it be in your Youth.

II. Let that Kindneſs you ſhew to God, be ſuch as He Himſelf will count ſo.

First, Do you begin to ſhew Kindneſs to God betimes. *Bis dat qui cito dat.* He that gives preſently, doubles his Gift. It is not Manners for you to make God wait, who can command your All, and doth deſerve it, and more too. Methinks it was very ſtrange that the ſlothful Spouſe ſhould lie framing Excuſes, and let her Loving and Glorious Lord ſtand knocking, and begging at her Door, till his Head was filled with Dew, and his Locks with drops of the Night. *What thou doſt, do quickly*, ſaid *Chriſt* to *Judas*, when he was upon the deſign of Betraying him. So ſay I to you, what you do, do quickly. God loves cheerful Givers, and ſpeedy ones too. I would not have you come off ſlowly and hardly. The Scripture calls upon you, to be *prepared* to every good Work, and *ready* to every good Work; and if there be any ſuch thing in the World, as a good Work, then to love God and ſhew kindneſs to him muſt needs be it: therefore do not ſtand in need of much Wooing, that will not be for your Honour nor Intereſt.

I muſt needs tell you of my being verily perſwaded concerning many of you, that you have done this already, that God and you are Friends, that you have choſen him who firſt choſe you; that you have entered your ſelves his Covenant Servants and People; and when he hath ſaid, *My Son, give me thine Heart*; you have anſwered, *Yea, Lord, here it is, take it,*

it, keep it, mend it, new make it, dwell in it, command it, order it, as thou pleaſeſt. And for you, and ſuch as you are, we do bleſs the Name of God, and wiſh there were more of your Spirit, Temper, and Life; when we think of your Walking in the Truth, we think of it with Gladneſs, and over you we do greatly and heartily rejoyce, as over thoſe that are the returns of our Prayers, over thoſe who are the Fruit of our Labours, for whom we have Travailed in Birth, longing to ſee Chriſt formed in you; over you we do rejoyce, as over the Bleſſings of the Nation, and the hopes of the preſent Age. Upon you we look with Delight, as upon thoſe that will be a Seed to ſerve our God (when our Heads ſhall be laid in Duſt) and counted to him for a Generation, when the Young Profligate Debauched Frie, that now do ſo greatly ſwarm among us, ſhall go out with a Stink, and be counted as they are, the Dung and Off-ſcouring of the World. Go on, as you have begun, reſt in your Love, do not abate, but increaſe it: Love him more and more, whom you can never love too well; continue to do that which you will never repent of doing; be always paying that Debt of Love and Duty to God, which you can never have paid, and the payment whereof is your own inriching.

But I fear there are ſome among you, and oh! that there were not many, who have

been Strangers to God, and Rebels againſt him hitherto; who have been ſtubborn and refractory, and Enemies hitherto; who have deſpiſed this Grace, rejected his Motions, been Deaf to all his Charmings, and would have your own Will, and your own Way, and go on in Perverſneſs and Frowardneſs of your Hearts; do you now lay aſide that roughneſs of your Spirits. Oh! that the Enmity may now be Slain, and you would acquaint your ſelves with him, and be at peace, for thereby Good will come to you. We are *Paranymphs*, or Friends of the Bridegroom; our VVork is to VVooe for God and Chriſt, to get for them as many of the hearts of the Children of men as we can; and I ſhall uſe with you the bleſſed Apoſtle *Paul*'s Language, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19. 20. *God is in Chriſt, reconciling the World unto himſelf, not imputing their Treſpaſſes unto them, and hath commited unto us the word of Reconciliation. Now then, we are Ambaſſadors from Chriſt; as though God did beſeech you by us, we Pray you in Chriſts ſtead, be ye reconciled unto God.* And will you? will you indeed? Oh that you would! Oh! that I might go from hence, to my dear Lord and Maſter, and ſay, *Yonder was ſuch an one to day, and ſuch an one, and ſuch an one, that are Sins Friends, and thine Enemies no more; that are Bewailing and Weeping over their former Folly and Eſtrangement, and Averſation from thee; and now the Gates have lifted up their Heads, and the Everlaſting Doors of their Souls*

do

do ſtand open for thee, O King of Glory! to enter in. Be ye the Friends of God now, and deal kindly with him in theſe three Things.

I. Be ever mindful of Him.
II. Give up your ſelves to Him.
III. Lay out your *All* for Him.

Firſt. Now begin, and hold on to be ever mindful of Him; your Thoughts have been vain, looſe, and extravagant; whereas they ſhould have been ſublime and great, as ſo many winged Meſſengers ſent out by your Soul to Converſe with God, and the Glories above, they have been ſordid and vile, gravelling upon the Earth, and running wild after this and that Vanity, which was not worthy their attendance, and could never pay them for the time and pains that was ſpent and laid out upon them. Now take them off, and ſay with *Ephraim, What have I to do any more with Idols?* Or as *Jonah, Why ſhould I obſerve Lying Vanities, and forſake mine own mercies?* Now call them in, and lay a Law upon them, that they may not wander at their former rate; but direct them to God; let him be the choſen and beloved object of your Meditations; yea, let them not only be directed to him, but as much as in you lies, fixed upon him. *My heart, ſaid* David, *is fixed, O God my heart is fixed.* Live every day in the Contemplation of God; whoſe Beauty

and Beams will not dazle, but delight and ſtrengthen the Eye, and convey Life and Vigour into all the Faculties. Let your firſt Thoughts in the Morning take their Flight to God. *When I awake, I am ſtill with thee.* And let your laſt Thoughts at Night, take their reſt and repoſe in God. Riſe with Him that will Sanctifie the Day; lie down with him, that will be your Security in the Night, and walk every where with him; for he is the moſt Faithful Friend, and beſt Companion. Mingle Thoughts of God with worldly Buſineſs, and all the affairs of your Calling. Be not ſo Immerſt, and over Head and Ears in theſe things, but that you may now and then caſt an Eye toward Heaven, and ſend up thither an Holy Ejaculation. Converſe with God, when you are Converſing with one another; for of all Friends he is the beſt: the preſence of an hundred Friends will not make up the abſence of one God. The two Diſciples, though good Men, could not keep one another warm in their walk to *Emmaus*; their Diſcourſes ſufficiently ſpake their inward diſturbances: But when *Chriſt* joyned himſelf to them, their Hearts did even burn within them. Being under the Rays of that Sun, they preſently contracted an holy and comfortable Heat.

The Thoughts of God are exceeding *Precious*, ſo long as they are right. So 139 *Pſalm*, *How precious are thy Thoughts unto me, O God?*

So

So they were *to him*, and so too *in themselves*. There is an Incomparable worth and value in them: Those that thought upon His Name, were remembred by Him, and should be so in the day when he comes to make up his Jewels: And they greatly conduce to the inriching of the Soul, the Mind with Knowledge, and the Heart with Grace: there being a mighty power in the Thoughts, for the assimilating of the Soul, to the Objects with which they are most familiarly Conversant.

And as these Thoughts of God, when becoming ones, and duly formed, are very *precious*, so they are no less pleasant to a Soul rightly constituted. They do all contribute to the increasing of its Holiness; yea, and to the increasing of its Comforts. *Psalm* 104. 34. *My Meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord.* These Meditations will be my Dainties, these Thoughts my Raptures. *Psal.* 63. 5, 6. *My Soul shall be satisfied, as with Marrow and Fatness; and my Mouth shall praise thee with joyful Lips, when I remember thee upon my Bed, and Meditate on thee in the Night Watches.* He was then an Exile, banished from God's house, and his own, in a dry and thirsty Land, where there was no Water. But, saith he, though I can meet with no refreshing below, I find satisfaction in a God above, when my Thoughts feed upon him. Here are but *Husks*, there is *Marrow*. *Omni Voluptate perfunditur animus.* My Mind and Soul is re-

repleniſhed with all Delights. As my thoughts of him are renewed, ſo are my pleaſures in him. What ſaid the *Spouſe*, after a long acquaintance with Chriſt, and intimate Communion, 1 *Cant.* 3. *Thy Name is as Oyntment poured forth.* Which is ſo Aromatick, that it doth *recreare animum*, refreſh and revive the Spirits. All the glorious Attributes of God, which are the Letters of His Name, by which He will be known to the Children of Men, eſpecially his own, are as ſo many fragrant Flowers; and while your Thoughts do, like the laborious Bee, ſettle and dwell upon them, and ſuck from them, they will gather and bring home Honey to the Hive; I mean that which will ſweeten your *Duties*, ſo that you ſhall delight greatly in His Commandments; and ſweeten your *Lives* to you, ſo that you ſhall be in a Corner of Heaven, while upon Earth; and ſweeten your *Afflictions* to you, ſo that you ſhall not faint under them, but poſſeſs your Souls in Patience: and alſo ſweeten your *Comforts* to you, and make them more comfortable and delicious, being as Sugar in your Wine; it will indeed ſweeten all to you: It will make your bitter things tollerable, and your ſweet things unſpeakable. *Thou haſt put more gladneſs into my Heart, than when their Corn and Wine Increaſeth.* Pſalm. 4. 7.

Come, Young-men, you are for Pleaſures, I know you are, and I do adviſe you to ſeek them

them where you will be ſure to find them; *i. e.* in God and Chriſt, who are *Pleaſant for Delights.* Theſe are the *ſafeſt*; they will not coſt you too dear, they will not turn ſower, as thoſe of Sin do, which are but for a Seaſon, and then prove the Poyſon of Aſps within you, which will cauſe endleſs Gripes and Tortures. And theſe are the *beſt*; ſearch all the Treaſures of Nature, and you will not meet with what will match them: therefore be perſwaded to this, be ſo kind to God, Did I ſay to God? Yes, I might, he is pleaſed to reckon it ſo; but I add, be ſo kind to your ſelves, as to think of God; do not give him cauſe to complain, that *He is not in all your Thoughts*; as 10. *Pſalm.* 4. Nor that *you have forgotten him Daies without Number*, as in this, 2. *Jere.* 32. Do not ſo, young Ones, I beſeech you, do not, no, no; Do you think of God, delight to think of him, ſtudy to think of him; think of him often, and often; look upon your Minds, as being in the beſt Frame when thus Imployed. This is your Intereſt, and your Duty; it is indeed the Duty of all; you that are come to Old Age, whoſe Faculties are weakned, and Memories ſhattered, ought ſtill to think of God; whatever you let go, you ſhould ſtill retain God in your knowledg and thoughts. It is a thouſand, thouſand Pities, that an Old Saint ſhould forget his Old and Beſt Friend: but it is, Young Ones, your Duty in ſpecial, and accordingly

ly is particularly commanded, and required of You, 12 *Eccles.* 1. *Remember thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth.* Cogita Deum mature. *Think of God early*; that is the way to think of him often, to continue to think of him. When you do accustom your selves to such Thoughts, you will get an habit of it; and then such Thoughts will afterward be easily form'd, and doubly welcom; do this then; Will You? Oh! that you would. Young-men, and Women, Children, think of God, for the Lord alwaies before you.

Secondly, Be prevailed with, to devote and give up your selves to God. Young *Jacob* did so. 28 *Gen.* 20, 21. *He vowed a Vow, and said, If God will be with me, and keep me in the way that I go, and will give me Bread to eat, and Raiment to put on, so that I come again to my Fathers House in Peace, the* LORD *shall be my* GOD. And though these Words are spoken conditionally; I do not in the least Question, but *Jacob* was resolved, let *God* do with him what he pleased, he would take Him for his God, and as such he would love, and own, and serve Him, and bind himself to Him for all his Daies. Do you do so too; I hope your Parents did give you up to God in your Infancy, and did bind You to Love and Obey Him, and in that Excellent and Solemn Ordinance of *Baptism*, Sealed you up for Him. If any of them did not, they were greatly wanting to their Parental Duty, and did

did not do for You what they ought; it was their work to bring You under the Bond of the Covenant, having been Inſtrumental for giving you your Being, and bringing you into the World. But tho thoſe that brought you to that Ordinance, and gave you up thereby to God, did ſo far perform what was Incumbent upon them, and laid upon you ſuch an Obligation, as you cannot ſhake off; yet ſtill you muſt not look upon that as ſufficient for you; as your Parents have done their part, you muſt do yours, and ſo further ratifie and confirm what was done by them: there muſt be your own Self-reſignation, you muſt lay hold upon the Covenant; God hath a right to you upon many accounts already; as He is your Creator, and Preſerver, and Benefactor, and Redeemer, and as your Parents dedicated you to Him; but all this will not Iſſue in your Benefit and Eternal Advantage, unleſs your own Donation be Super-added. Hence that command, 23 *Proverbs*, 26. *My Son give me thy Heart.* Thy Father gave thee up to me, but do thou give up thy ſelf to me. I beſeech you therefore by the Mercies of God, all thoſe Mercies that have been given into you by the hand of his Providence, and thoſe that are contained in the womb of his Promiſe; all thoſe Mercies that you have already received, and all thoſe that you live in the hope and expectation of, Do you preſent your Selves, Souls and Bodies, unto God,

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an Holy and Living Sacrifice, for that will be exceeding acceptable in His Sight, a Sacrifice of a ſweet Smelling Savour; and I am ſure it is no other than your reaſonable Service.

Here I would have you ſeriouſly conſider, that there is no Kindneſs to this; as *David* ſaid of *Goliah's* Sword, *none to that*; ſo ſay I, *none to this*, none comparable; yea, there is indeed no Kindneſs without this, 50. *Pſalm*, 16. *Unto the Wicked* GOD *ſaith, What haſt thou to do to Declare my Statutes? Or that thou ſhouldeſt take my Covenant in thy Mouth.* Thou wilt talk of Religion, and diſcourſe about my VVill and Law, and pretend to be one in Covenant with me, and yet be a wicked VVretch, that caſteſt off my fear, and wilt not ſubmit to the conduct of my VVord and Spirit: VVhat haſt thou to do with theſe holy Things? In dealing about them, thou meddleſt with what belongs not to thee: VVithout this, your Profeſſion, be it never ſo fair and lovely, is no better than a flaſhy Complement, a meer flattering him with your Lips; your Religion, whatever it is in the Eyes of Men, is in His Eye a Lye, a lifeleſs Image, which he will deſpiſe and abhor, when he awakes to Judgment; and all that you do in it will turn to none account: that which you call your Righteouſneſs, ſhall not be ſo much as mention'd, unleſs to your Reproach and Condemnation: you will find it is all time and pains thrown away.

And

And again, I deſire you to Imprint this upon your Thoughts, and repeat the conſideration of it; that you cannot place your Love any where better, nay not any where ſo well as upon God: If you can find a better Friend, a more advantageous Match, make much of it. My Lord and Maſter doth not deſire your prejudice, but good; and I am ſure there is none ſo worthy of you, as He is. The *Spouſe* was abundantly pleas'd with her Choice of Chriſt; for ſpeaking of Him, ſhe ſaith, *He is the chiefeſt of Ten Thouſand, and altogether Lovely.* Look where you will, in all the World you cannot ſee His Fellow. A precious Lovely Jeſus, Infinitely Fairer than the Children of Men. And then there is none that can do for you, as He can; none hath got an Arm like him, none a Treaſure like His: His Arm is that of Omnipotency, long enough to reach at the greateſt diſtance; ſtrong enough to act in the greateſt Difficulty: His Fulneſs is inexhauſtible, and His Riches unſearchable. Therefore I deſire you to be wiſe for your ſelves, and know in this your Day, the things that make for your own Intereſt and Peace. A ſincere cordial, giving up your ſelves to God, is the beſt, nay, the only way to befriend your ſelves, and to mend both your Hearts and Conditions for ever.

Thirdly, Shew your kindneſs to God, in laying out your ſelves, and all for him; will you live upon

on God, a life of Faith; and with God, a life of intimate Communion; and to him a Life of Duty and Obedience. God indeed is not your God, unleſs he be your End; if you make your ſelves your Ends, you make your ſelves your Gods. And, you find in the 3. *Phillipians* 19. *That their End is Deſtruction, whoſe Belly, whoſe Self is their God.* It is a great deal more for your Honour and Safety, for your Comfort and Profit, to make *Jehovah* your God. Let who will have their Gods on Earth, as for you, chooſe for your Selves that God that is in Heaven. *Paul* was able to ſay, *That to him to Live was Chriſt*: Chriſt was the *Author* of his Life; he purchaſed it for them. Chriſt was the *Principle* of his Life. 2. *Gal.* 20. *I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me.* Chriſt was the *pattern* of his Life, he ſtudied Imitation of him, and Likeneſs to him. The exalting of his Name, and inlarging of Chriſt's Intereſt, was the *deſign* of his Life. Oh! that it may be yours. What are you? Be that for God? What have you? Imploy that for God. 14. *Rom.* 7, 8. *None of us liveth to himſelf, and no man dieth to himſelf; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Chriſtianorum eſt tum in vitâ, tum in morte ſolius Chriſti Gloriam ſpectare.* It is the Duty of Chriſtians, it is that which highly becomes them, both living and dying, to look to the Glory of Chriſt, and of him alone. Up then, and be doing. See what Stock you have? What Parts,

Power,

Power, Intereſt? What Talents you are truſted with? And be ſure to Trade with them all wiſely, induſtriouſly for the honour and intereſt, of your great Lord and Maſter; as thoſe good and faithful Servants did, who were ſo much commended and ſo well rewarded, *Mat.* 25. Fill up your day, loſe none of your time, ſince all is precious, and yours is uncertain and ſhort: fill up your place, do not leave that empty, and your Relations, to your Parents, Maſters, Spiritual, Civil, Natural Relations do you fill up with Duty, and with Activity for God; do not idle away your Seaſons and Opportunities. God ſent you not hither meerly, nor moſtly to ſleep and to play. Do not live at all for baſe and ſordid purpoſes, nor only for little and low Ones; but for the higheſt and moſt Noble that can be. *Aquila non capit muſcas.* The Eagle doth not catch Flies, nor ſhould an High-born Prince who is Heir to a Crown, rake Dunghills, or ſtop Ovens; much leſs ſhould you O Saints! Who are beſt deſcended, and have the Nobleſt Blood running in your Veines, having been born of God.

To live to God, *is living Indeed*; this, and this only, deſerves name of Life: a Sinfull, Senſual Voluptuous Life is in Scripture account, Death, not Life, this is Living like Rational Creatures, there is not greater reaſon for any thing in the World. Such a life as this you will be able to give a good acount of; you will be

able to justifie it; this life will commend *you*, and all will commend *it*; this is *Profitable* living, it will bring you in greater Advantages, than your best trades, and hardest labour can; it will turn losses into benefits, and Death into gain; when *Paul* had said *to him to live was Christ*, he presently added, *and to die is gain*; though he knew, at Death he should leave all, yet he should lose nothing: *How* much soever and how great things, he left at his departure hence; he should find greater things and better in the place whither he was going. This is *Living for Eternity*; ensuring Friends in the other World; laying up treasure in Heaven; and that becomes them who do not die like Beasts, but must live *to Eternity*. This is to live *in a Compliance* with, and Correspondence, and answerableness to the design of Christs death; when you do this, then Christ sees of the travail of his Soul, then He hath one of those things for which he died; for we are told, 2 *Corinth*, 5, 15. *He died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.*

I have now, young Ones, acquainted you with the errand upon which I come unto you, and delivered the Message which my great Master committed to me for you. God having taken out of the World, and out of this Pulpit, from this Congregation, and his labouring among you, my truely Dear Brother, and

your

your no less dear Pastor, to an Immediate enjoyment of, and Eternal resting in himself; whose Province this should have been; had his Life and Health been continued to him; you desired me to stand up at this time in his stead, and to do this Work: I yielded to your request, and have come to do it: and you see I have been a Petitioner to you, and come a begging, having made it my business to desire a kindness of you; a kindness, but for whom? Not for my self, not for a poor Creature, but for my dear *Master*, the great, mighty, and glorious God, who loves you and desires you though he needs you not. It is in his Name I come, and for him that I do now, with so much importunity woo. I beseech you, yea, with utmost earnestness I beseech you, do not deny me, but add to *my joy* in being kind *to my God*, love Him, accept of Him, close with Him, and give up your selves to Him. Shall I prevail with you? Have I prevailed with you, with any of you? Oh that I could say I have; Oh that I might go away and tell my Master so, the news thereof would cause joy in Heaven, among the holy and blessed Angels: in order thereunto I will yet further back what hath said, with these two Arguments, which if you consider them, you will find carrying weight in them.

I. This kindness to God is your Duty.
II. It will prove kindness to your selves.

First, All the kindneſs that you do, or can ſhew unto God is unqueſtionably your *duty*. It is no other than his condeſcending Grace and Goodneſs to call it *Kindneſs*. It is indeed a *debt*, a juſt debt, which God may challenge at your hands, and for not diſcharging it caſt you into Priſon and keep you there for ever; whatſoever you can give to him, or do for him is but the payment of a debt, yea, but a *part payment*, you have imbezel'd and loſt ſo much; you have been ſo fooliſhly free and prodigal upon his and your Enemies, you are now grown ſo miſerably weak and and poor, that you are inſolvent, in no capacity of laying down the utmoſt Farthing; you can never return to Him all that which your firſt Parents did receive of Him, in their own names, and in yours too. But think of that, whenſoever you give any thing, you give Him nothing but what is his own, more his than yours. *David* was free to acknowledge it, when he and his People had been ſo liberal toward the building of the Temple, yea, that the *willingneſs to* offer came from him too, as well as the Sums they offer'd: *Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price*; So ſaid *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19, 20. And thereupon he grounded his following Exhortation, *Therefore Glorifie God, in your Souls, and in your Spirit which are Gods*: and *all that* which you have is not your own, nay none of it; your parts are not; your ſtrength is not; your power and eſtate is not; your time is not;

none

none of theſe are you rown, they are Gods; you are but Servants, Stewards? God is the abſolute Lord, *as the Earth is his and the fulneſs thereof*, *Pſalm.* 24. 1. ſo are you, and all your fulneſs *of Him, and through Him*, are all things; therefore *all to Him.*

So that you are Wickedly unjuſt if you with-hold any thing from him, you rob God if you beſtow it upon other things; ſee what he ſaith of the Idolatrous *Jews*, *Hoſea*, 2, 8. *She did not know that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, and multiplied her Silver and Gold, which ſhe prepared for* Baal. They had all from *God*, and *Baal* had all from them, *God* was at the coſt, & *Baal* had the homage and honour; this he took heniouſly at their hands, and well he might; That they ſhould fight againſt him with his Mercies, and feaſt his Enemys with his Proviſion.

This alſo is moſt certain and conſiderable, that whatſoever you do return unto God is in a far worſe caſe than it was when you receiv'd it from *Him*. When you came out of his hands *you* were excellent and noble Creatures; but now *you* are vitiated & depraved, if you do give him your hearts you give him that which you may be heartily aſhamed of: What ſad and miſerable pieces are they? They are now vain hearts, and Sinful hearts, and hard hearts, deceitful above all things and deſperatly wicked, and it cannot but be a great condeſcention in him, to take them as they are now; but he will do it, and therefore be prevailed with

to give your hearts and your all to *Him*; for you are upon all accounts imaginable obliged to do it; you give *Him* no more than what is his own.

Secondly, The kindneſs which you ſhew to God is really a kindneſs to your ſelves, as thoſe vapours which are exhal'd by the Sun, and drawn up into the Air, are ſent down again to the Earth, in plentiful ſhowers, by which it is refreſh'd when weary, and both beautified and made fruitful; Would you be your own Friends? Would you do your ſelves a good turn? would you lay up in ſtore for afterward? would you in the midſt of all your uncertainties make ſure of a Friend that will be faithful, and ſtick to you as long as you live? that will rejoyce over you to do you Good, and make you happy both in time, and to Eternity; then be ſure to ſhew kindneſs to God. This People had done it in their Youth, following after Him as you have heard; and how much did God do for them? He was their *Guide* and *Reward*, He multiplied Miracles when their caſe called for them, He compaſt them about with his powerful Protection, ſo that as you find in the Verſe immediately after the Text; *all that devoured Him did offend, Evil came upon them*; God himſelf pleaded their cauſe and avenged their quarrel, and He will not be behind hand with you; He will do more for you, than your Parents, and all the Friends you have in the World can do

for you; He can do more for you than you can do for your ſelves, though you be never ſo Prudent and Induſtrious.

If thou be wiſe thou ſhalt be wiſe for thy Self, *Proverbs*, 9. 12. Cordial love to God is the beſt Self-love that can be; whoſoever is not a Friend to God, is his own worſt Enemy, and He will be ſure to repent of it; whereas kindneſs that is ſhewn to God; is like good Seed ſown in a fruitful Soil, which will abundantly reward the Perſon that ſcatters it in this World; it will yield an hundred Fold, yea and unſpeakably more, and in the world to come, life everlaſting. This, *Young Ones*, this is the moſt ſure direct and compendious way to make you rich indeed, and great indeed, and happy indeed; upon theſe terms God will with everlaſting kindneſs have Mercy upon you, and if you be ſo rewarded for the little kindneſſes you are in capacity of ſhewing to him, you your ſelves will be conſtrain'd with thankfulneſs, to acknowledg that you are very well paid. So much may ſuffice to be ſpoken to the firſt branch of the Exhortation, Oh that it may be found effectual upon you; I proceed to the next.

Secondly, Then I Exhort and beſeech you to look carefully, that you do not miſtake and deceive your ſelves, in a matter of ſo great importance, as this is. Be ſure that the kindneſs which you ſhew to God, be kindneſs of the right kind, that it have thoſe Ingredients

and Qualifications in it, that will commend it, and render it acceptable unto God; in a word that it be of such a nature, as that God will call it so. He is curious and strict in the case, you know how he dealt with *Peter*, asking him question upon question. *Simon, Son of Jonas, lovest thou me? John* 21. He went over with it thrice; there will be inquiry upon inquiry, and therefore you had need take heed to your selves, having to do with him that searcheth the Heart and possesseth the Reins, and who, as *Peter* said knoweth all things. I remember the saying of *Absalom* to *Hushai* the *Archite*, *Davids* Friend; when *Absalom*, like a wicked Son, had risen up in rebellion against his Father; this *Hushai* came to him and said, *God save the King, God save the King.* 2 *Sam.* 16. 16, 17. Pretending to own that unnatural Traytor, and wish well to him; though indeed he intended nothing less. But what said *Absalom* to him? *is this thy kindness to thy Friend? Why wentest thou not with thy Friend?* And may not we speak in the same manner to a great many that profess high, and talk much of Religion, and their love to God; but walk unsuitably, their conversation is so vain, and loose and disorderly that it gives the Lie to their Profession, they live evident palpable contradictions to what they say, *Is this your kindness to your God?* s this your tenderness over his name, and your Zeal for his glory? And how dreadfully amazing would it be, and as a Sword in their

bones,

bones; with what horror would it fill them, if at the laſt and great Day, God ſhould ſay to any of the Children of Men, to any that are now in this Congregation, Was this your kindneſs to me? You did enter into Covenant with me, you called your ſelves by my name, you attended upon my Worſhip and Ordinances, you Joyned your ſelves to my People, but you carried your ſelves at a very ſtrange rate, you were unmindful of Me, and diſobedient to Me, you brake my Commandments and hated to be Reformed: And was this the love you had for Me? Was this the fear you had of Me? Was this the delight you took in Me? You know what He ſaid to the Prophet *Ezekiel*, concerning his Auditors, who ſeemed to rejoyce in his Miniſtry, and to be greatly pleaſed with his manner of managing the Work, *Ezek.* 33. 31. *They hear thy words, but they will not do them, for with their mouth they ſhew much love, but their Heart goeth after their Covetouſneſs.* All their love is Fictitious, and no more, than from the teeth outward. Now I ſay, look to it, that no ſuch reproach may fall upon you, but that what you would have eſteemed a kindneſs to God, may be found ſuch indeed, when it ſhall be brought to the Divine Touch-ſtone; and be ſure of this, that as *God cannot be deceived*, being all eye, ſo he will not *be mocked*, being Jealous for his Name, Intereſt and Glory. To this purpoſe I adviſe, that there may be theſe four Ingredients, or

Proper-

Properties (call them which you will) found in your love and kindness to God, let it be,

I. Sincere.
II. Abounding.
III. Abiding.
IV. Growing.

First, See to it, that there be *reallity* and *Sincerity* in your kindness. Be not so much your own Enemies as to please, and content your selves, with vain idle pretences, heartless words, and empty shews. You would not be put off with shadows, do not go about to put God off so, who can easily look under the Mask, and see through the paint, and doth observe, and know what is indeed the constitution, and complexion of the Soul. *Joab* and *Judas* had their kisses, when they both had cruelty and blood in their designs, the one stabbing *Abner*, and the other betraying *Christ* his Lord and Master. As there is a great deal of Counterfit Money in the World, so there is a great deal of Counterfit kindness, which will certainly be the ruine and undoing of the owner. As for you, do you love God *indeed*? and fear Him *indeed*, and give up your selves to Him *indeed*; see to your Faith, that it be the Faith of God's Elect. Faith unfeigned, that it embraceth Christ, closeth with Him, and unites to Him? And also to your Love, that it be Sincere, and then Grace will be with you,

you, accepting, ſupporting, and crowning Grace: I would not have any of you to be found *cheats* at laſt, that it ſhould be ſaid, ſuch an one made a brave ſhew, and a great noiſe, but he was an errant Cheat, a Painted Sepulchre, gaudy, but full of rottenneſs. Though your love will be greatly ſhort and deficient, as to the *Meaſure*, and degree of it, yet let it be right, as to the *Nature* and kind of it.

The Sacred Scriptures do give us Excellent rules and precepts, concerning that love which the Saints and People of God ſhould bear toward one another. I will for them refer you only unto two places; the one is that of *Paul*, *Rom.* 12. 9. *Let love be without Diſſimulation*; altogether without it; though there be imperfection in your love, let there be no diſſembling in it; do not in the leaſt impoſe upon one another as to this Excellent Grace, and Great Duty; Do not pretend to much, when you have none, or but a very little; let not your Expreſſions flee an higher pitch, than your Affections do; ſpeak the truth in your hearts, only ſuch ſhall abide in Gods Tabernacle, and dwell in his Holy Hill. Love not in Word and in Tongue, *i. e.* Though you may and ought to love in theſe, the Law of Kindneſs ſhould be in your Lips, but not only there, but in *Deed* and in *Truth* too. The mouth muſt ſpeak out of the abundance of the heart: Do not draw any thing at the tap

but

but what is in the Veſſel. The other rule is given out by *Peter* to us. *Peter.* 1, 22. *See that you love one another with a Pure Heart, Fervently.* Where, by *Pure Heart* we are not to underſtand, an heart *quite* purged from all iniquity; for ſuch an one, is not to be found among the Children of Men, dwelling in houſes of Clay; but an heart purged from *Hypocriſie.* Let not your love run ſuch dregs; Now do you obſerve and follow theſe precepts with reference to *That Love*, which you profeſs to *God*, and that Kindneſs which you ſay you have for *God.* See that your Love to him, be without diſſimulation, and have its ſeat in a pure heart. Love him for himſelf, and that with a *Supream Love.* Let him have not only a Room in your affections, but the Throne. Let other things ſtoop to *God*, and become his *Foot-ſtool*: give them no more than an inferior ſubordinate *Love*: for that is enough for them, as much as the beſt of them do deſerve. *He* that doth not *Love God* above all things, will be caſt, as one that doth not *Love* him at all.

Secondly, See that there be an abounding in that kindneſs which you have for *God.* Draw up all the Sluces and let your affections run out to *God*, in the fulleſt ſtream. As to the things of the World, yea Perſons, Relations, as well as things, we ſhould moderate our affections; ride them with a Bridle, and keep them within Compaſs: There is a great deal of Reaſon for that; becauſe we find that they

have

have but a *Limited* goodneſs in them, which is imperfect, and mixt; and becauſe, as daily Experience ſhews us, they are exceeding *uncertain*, and of ſhort *continuance*, living and flouriſhing to day, blown upon, and withered, and dead to morrow: And alſo, becauſe when we Love and Value them at too great a rate, we do encreaſe our own ſorrow, and make work for Repentance afterward. *God* having prepared a Gourd for *Jonah*, which yielded him a refreſhing ſhade; the poor man was exceeding glad of it, and rejoyced with great Joy: But when a Worm came and ſmote it that it died, his former exceeding Joy was converted to exceeding Vexation, and he thought he ſhould *do well in being angry to the Death.* Therefore inſtead of being wedded and devoted to theſe things, our infinitely wiſe, and gracious God would have us ſit looſe from them, as perſons weaned: 1 *Cor.* 7. 29, 30. It is his Will that, *They who have Wives, be as though they had none; and they that Rejoyce, as though they rejoyced not; and they that Buy as though they poſſeſſed not.* He that is moderate in his *Love* while he hath, will not be exceſſive in his Sorrow when he loſeth.

But you muſt ſee to it, that you abound in your Love to God; when a Spark is enough for other Things, here you ought to have your Flame: *Thou ſhalt Love the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Might.* 6. Dutero. 5. *All, All, All.*

It

It must be with a *single* Heart, not *double*; and with an *whole* Heart, not divided. There is no danger, and therefore need be no fear, of a sinful Excess here. We can never Love him too well, whom we can never Love enough: Nor can we give him too much of our Hearts, who deserves of every one of us, Ten Thousand times Ten Thousand better Hearts, than those which we have, if we had them to bestow. The Sacred Scripture (which is our Golden, and Perfect Rule) would have an Husband love his Wife so dearly, that it doth not give him leave to *err* in his love to her. *Prov.* 5. 19. *Let her Breasts satisfie thee at all times, and be thou always ravished with her Love.* In the *Hebrew*, it is as the Margent of your Bible tells you, *Err thou always in her Love.* Though Conjugal Love ought to be managed with Caution, and Holy Fear: But then, How greatly, How dearly should we Love our God? in loving of whom, *we cannot possibly err*; we cannot over-love him: When our Love hath run its longest reach, it comes too short; and when it is raised to its greatest height, it is too low. Our Hearts when most inlarged, are too narrow for an infinite good; and when most lively, they are too dead for the God of Life. It would be a burning Shame for any to think (though there are too many that carry as if they thought) a little Love sufficient for him, who hath enough Sweetness, and Beauty, and Riches, to feed and maintain, and draw out, and keep up all the

Love

Love we have; and Excellencies enough to deſerve unſpeakably more, and to find a full Employment for Eternal, and Higheſt Admirations.

Thirdly, Look to it, That the Love and Kindneſs which you have for God, be permanent and abiding. That which is in this *Chapter*, the 5. *Verſe* of it, charged upon *Iſrael*, is, that they were departed from this God: yea, that *they were gone far from him, and did follow after Vanity, and were become Vain.* Their former Kindneſs was now turned into Neglects, and groſs Affronts, though God had not given them any Cauſe ſo to do. They were Fooliſh and Abſurd in doing it. For as he tells them, *They had found no Iniquity in him.* He had not been unjuſt to them; He had not been in any thing wanting to them; He was ſo far from being *a Wilderneſs, and a Land of Darkneſs* to them, that they had found him to be a Fruitful Field, a *Goſhen*, a *Canaan*, a Sun of Righteouſneſs, conſtant in his Care, abundant in his Bounty, and pleaſant for Delights. And ſo, while he remembred the *Kindneſs of their Youth*, he ſhews how great Reaſon he had to chide them *for*, and upbraid them *with* the *Unkindneſs of their Age.* In their Youth they followed God, but in their Age they doted upon Idols.

We have to our Grief and Sorrow, ſeen too much of this in a great many Perſons: While Young, Noble Vines, and a right Seed; but

but afterwards, proving the degenerate Plants of a ſtrange Vine. While Young, very Promiſing and *Hopeful*; but afterwards Deſperate, and daringly Prophane. They are pleaſant Children, whom Parents think Trees of Righteouſneſs; but they bring forth the Grapes of *Sodom*, and Cluſters of *Gomorrah*: I beſeech you to beware of this. That Fire of Love to God, which now ſeems kindled in your *Hearts*, ſhould be like to that upon the Altar, never to go out, but to be kept burning Day and Night. It is the high Commendation, and *Honour* of our dear Lord Jeſus, That *having loved his own, he loved them to the end*; yea, and without end too: *He* loved them to his Death, and in it, yea, and after it: Though he ſuffered ſo much by them, and for them, yet he carried the Love of them to *Heaven* with him, and there he will Love them for ever. *He* that upon Earth loved them, and waſhed them in his Blood, will go on to Love them in *Heaven*; and there ſet them upon his Throne, and Crown them with Glory. Now we ſhould write after his Copy, and the ſame Mind that is in him towards us, ſhould be in us towards him, and his Father, and Spirit. And indeed, there is not the leaſt ſhadow of Reaſon, why we ſhould ceaſe to Love him, who neither doth, nor can ceaſe to be Lovely. No Reaſon why we ſhould abate in our Affections to him, who remains infinite in all his Perfections; yea, and loving to all his People, as well as Lovely in himſelf.

ſelf. And let me add this, if ever you be Saved, and come to Heaven; you will there Love him to the length of Eternity. And therefore it is fit, you ſhould here Love him to the end of your Time; ſince you will be there fixed in your Love, be not there fluttering. I would adviſe you, to live and die, loving of God. I can aſſure you, it is good advice, therefore follow it.

Once more, *Fourthly*, Look carefully to this, that the Love and Kindneſs which you have for God, be growing and increaſing continually. I remember that Paſſage, which we meet with. 2. *Kings* 10. 18. Jehu *gathered all the People, and ſaid unto them*, Ahab *ſerved* Baal *a little*; *but* Jehu *ſhall ſerve him much*. I ſhall take leave to allude to it; and would have you in your Layings-out upon God, and for him, to make it your Deſign and Buſineſs, to out-do others, and your ſelves. Have you loved God a little? I am ſure it is too little; now go on to love him a great deal. Have you ſerved God a little? Now proceed, to ſerve him much. Be not only ſtedfaſt and immoveable, but *abounding* in the Work of the Lord. Have you begun to ſhew ſome Kindneſs? add to it, and ſhew him more. Let him have more of your *Thoughts*: See that they be frequently repeated, and dwell with him, as their only home. Let him have more of your *Hearts*; the all of them. Let him have more of your *Deſires*, that you may underſtand experimentally, what it is to follow hard after him; to

thirſt for him, to pant after him, to long; yea, to break with the longings you have for him; what it is to fill up that Expreſſion. 73. *Pſal. Whom have I in Heaven, but thee; and there is none upon Earth that I Deſire, beſide thee.* Let him have more of your *Time*: Out of what he hath allowed to you, carve for him as large a ſhare as poſſibly you can. Let him have more of your *Company*, and follow the Examples of *Enoch* and *Noah*, and other holy Men, whoſe Lives were *a walking with God*. I commend to you, that *Old Godlineſs*, which is unſpeakably better, than *Old Gold*. And let him have more of your *Strength*, put it out in his Work, at another rate, and higher than ever you did yet, and go to your utmoſt. This was *David*'s Reſolution in the 71. *Pſal.* 14. *I will hope continually, and will yet praiſe thee more and more.* He had done it before, and he would do it ſtill; I will do it; yet, I am not weary of it, yet: Nay, ſaith he, and I will do it more than I have done; yea, more and more: I will be upon my advance; my praiſe ſhall be higher and higher.

It was a great Sin and Shame, for the Church of *Epheſus*, that ſhe had left her firſt *Love*; which was a leaving it by way of *Abatement*, ſhe had not loſt all, but ſhe had loſt ſome; her *Love* to God, and the Ways, and Things of God, was exceedingly leſſened; ſhe had grown cold in that *Love*, which once was ſtrong and fervent; for this *Chriſt* blam'd her. 2. *Revel.* 2. 3. *And threatned to remove her, Candleſtick*

dleſtick out of its place unleſs ſhe did Repent and remember from whence ſhe was fallen, and do her Firſt Works. But now I ſhew you an excellent way of leaving your firſt Love; that is, when you leave it in a way of Progreſs and Improvement: As *Paul* did when he forgat thoſe things which were behind, and reached out to thoſe things which were before, preſſing on to the Mark. 3. *Philip.* 13. There is, you know, a *Childiſh* Love, which is pretty and taking, and doth very much become Children: But as they grow up in Age and Stature, and Underſtanding, they put away that, and muſt, and do come to *Manly* Love, which is Rational and Judicious and Serious, more firm and ſolid, leſs troubleſome, and more pleaſing and acceptable. Now do you make out after that; get a *Maſculine* Love to God, a *Flaming* Love. I have ſome-where Read, That there being one who deſired to know what manner of man *Baſil* was, there was a Pillar of Fire preſented to him in a Dream, with this Motto, *Talis eſt Baſilius.* Such an one is *Baſil*; and ſuch an one ſhould you be, and I; and ſuch ſhould all thoſe be, who love the Lord Jeſus in Sincerity. We are Pillars of Smoak, black'd and ſooted with Infirmities; let us be alſo Pillars of Fire, burning, flaming with Love to our deareſt God and Saviour: and indeed the way to be ſo, is to ſtudy God, and to converſe frequently, intimately with him. For the more you mind God, and contemplate Him, the more

will you ſee into His Beauty and Glory, and Infinite Perfections; and that Sight will greatly affect and inlarge your Heart, and draw your Love out exceedingly to him: and oh! that your and my Love to this bleſſed God, may thrive and increaſe every Day, and be ſtill growing greater and greater, till we come to Heaven, where it will be perfect. Oh, that that God, who hath ſo much Love in Heaven, may have a great deal more from us, and upon Earth, than yet He hath.

USE III.

In the laſt *Uſe*, which we are to make of this Point, I ſhall ſpeak a few Words of Comfort to you, who have ſhewn, and do go on to ſhew Kindneſs unto God in the Daies of your Youth. You precious Young Ones, Children, Men, and Women, who have been under the power of a Divine Touch, and by Vertue thereof, find your Hearts taken off from the Vanities of the World, by which ſo many Thouſands are bewitched, and who make it your Deſire, Care, and Endeavour to Avoid and Flee from thoſe Youthful Luſts, which others are ſo eager in the purſuit of; and care not what Pains they take, nor what Coſt they are at, ſo they may gratifie them. You that have made choice of God as your *only One*, and *all in All*; and have in good Earneſt, not in Complement, Profeſt your ſelves his Servants, and ſtand Devoted to

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the fear and honour of his Name: you that are ſet for the pleaſing of God in all things, and for the Gloryfying of him, by ordering your Converſations aright, and for a walking with him, in a conſtant and intimate Communion, and for the Enjoyment of Him, as much as you can upon Earth, in the midſt of Avocations and Diſturbances, and perfectly in Heaven; you that are willing to do for Him as much as you can, and to ſuffer for *Him* as much as he ſhall pleaſe. You, in a word, that are deſirous to live for him, and to die for him, who make God both your Example and your End; you that are early ſetters forth for *Heaven*, you have great cauſe of rejoycing, from this ſingle Conſideration, there is much comfort that may flow forth, and empty its ſelf into your Boſomes; as I might ſhew you in ſundry Particulars, but ſhall briefly ſpeak only to theſe two.

Firſt, The Thoughts hereof may, and will be exceeding pleaſant to you afterward: You may as long as you live, remember it with Joy and Gladneſs; When, others ſhall reflect with Shame, upon the Sins of their Youth; and even tremble, to think how fearleſs they were of God, and how diſſobedient to Parents and Governours; and their Conſciences ſhall reproach and upbraid them, with the Vanities that they then purſued, and with the Follies that they then committed: Their Youthful Lies and Oaths; the Drunkenneſs and Uncleanneſs; the Chambering and Wantenneſs; the Ex-

Exceſs and Pride, and Stubbornneſs of their Youth, which will then lie heavy upon them, and wound them to the quick; which doubtleſs, cauſed that Prayer of *David*. 25. *Pſal*. 7. *Remember not the Sins of my Youth, nor my Tranſgreſſions.* How Cordial will it be to you; and how greatly reviving? To call to mind the Holineſs of your Youth; the Prayers you then put up to God for Mercy and Grace; the Deſires you then had of Chriſt, and the Spirit; the Tears you then ſhed for Sin; the Fellowſhip you then had with the Father, and with his Son, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; your walking in Communion with his People, in the Ordinances and Ways of the Goſpel; together, with the Pleaſure and Delight, you took in theſe Things. Aged People are greatly pleaſed with telling Old Stories, what they had done, and what they had ſeen a great many years ago; and it will much more pleaſe you, when you can tell of your Old Pieties, and Old Induſtry for God. Oh, ſaid good *Obadiah*, to the Prophet, *I thy Servant, feared the Lord from my Youth.* I have indeed ſhewn a Kindeeſs to his Servants, the Prophets, lately, by hiding them when they were in Danger; but that was not all; that was not the firſt of my Acquaintance with God; my Love to him; my Fear of him, is of much longer ſtanding than ſo. It began betimes, even in my Youth. That is a good Paſſage which *Solomon* hath in the 16. *Prov*. 31. *The hoary Head is a Crown of Glory, if it be found in the way of Righteouſneſs.* What more odious than

than an old Sinner? an Old Goat, an Old Fool, a Man Grey in Wickedneſs. *His Hoarineſs*, is a filthy Mouldineſs: then it is a Crown, when found in a way of Righteouſneſs; then it is *Honorable*, when accompanied with thoſe things that are ſo. When together with that *Hoarineſs*, there is an Underſtanding *Head*, and a Gracious *Heart*, and Exemplary Godlineſs. When the Growth in Knowledge and Grace, is ſuitable to the nnmbers of years. But then how doth that Crown Gliſter? when he that hath thoſe *Hoary Hairs*, can ſay, in this way of Righteouſneſs, my Green Years were found, as well as my *Hoary Head*. I Love God, now the ſhadows of the *Evening* are upon me, and ſo I did in the dawning of my Morning.

Secondly, The great God will remember it to your Advantage: And for certain, he will ſhew more Kindneſs to you, than you have ſhewn to him, or ever can. It was *He began. He Loved firſt*. Your Love is only the *Reflection* of his. And he will hold out to the laſt. And as he will never ceaſe *Loving*, ſo never give over *Doing* for you; but will be always *Liberal* as well as *Loving*. Are you now Trees of Righteouſneſs, planted in the *Houſe* of the Lord? And flouriſhing in the Courts of your God. You ſhall be watered with his Influence and Bleſſing, ſo as to bring forth Fruit in Old Age. And at laſt, he will take you up, remove you out of this Vineyard, and tranſplant you into the *Cæleſtial Paradiſe*. If you have now your Fruit unto *Holineſs*, you ſhall find, that

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the end will be Everlaſting Life. You have now begun your Days with God, and that is the way to end them with God and then to launch into the bottomleſs Ocean of Delights, the Eternity of Bliſs, which doth know no end. But to cloſe this Diſcourſe, my hearty Deſire and Prayer to God, for the Young Ones of *England* and *London*, is that they may be *a Seed to ſerve him, and counted to him for a Generation*, that they may be ſaved from the Errors, Superſtitions and Idolatries, from the Debaucheries and Profainneſs, from the Formalities and Fooleries of the Times; and that to the number of Serious Gracious Young Ones. There may by the Miniſtry of the Word, and Parental Inſtructions and Councel, be conſiderable Additions daily made. And Oh that you might make it your conſtant Work, to grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Chriſt, till you come to be thoroughly furniſhed for every good Work; and filled with all the fulneſs of God. And do you go on as you have begun? Tremble at the Thoughts of drawing back; becauſe that it will be *to Perdition*, and in them that do ſo, *Gods Soul will have no Pleaſure*; but *Work you out your Salvation*, and let *your way be as the ſhining Light, which ſhineth more and more to the perfect Day*. Amen, Amen.

FINIS.